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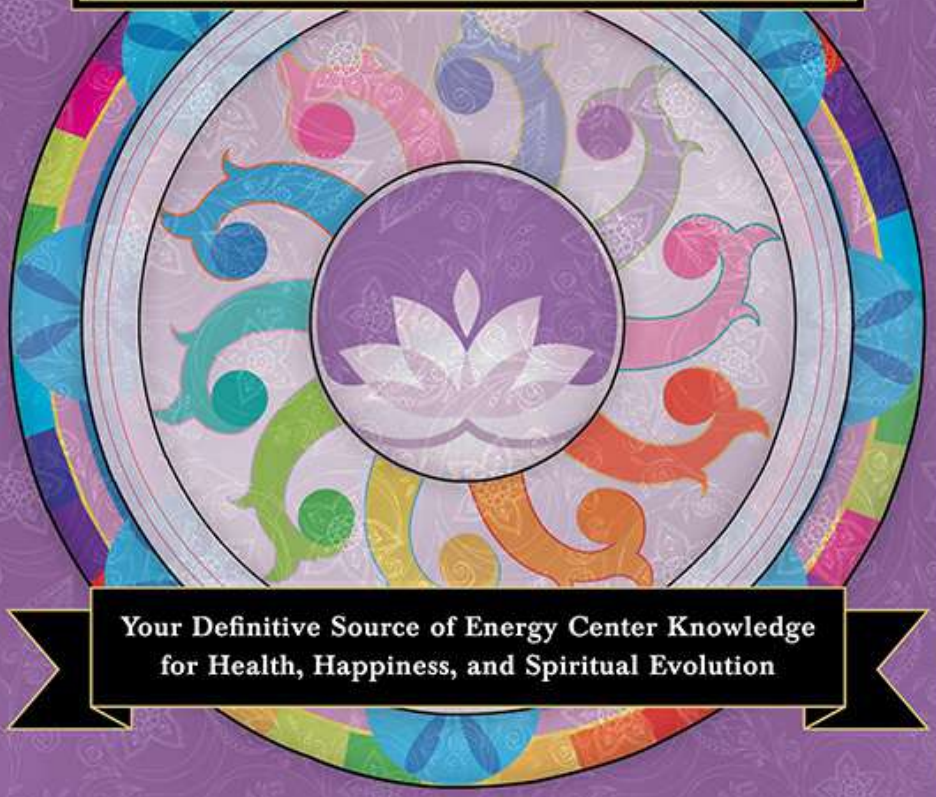
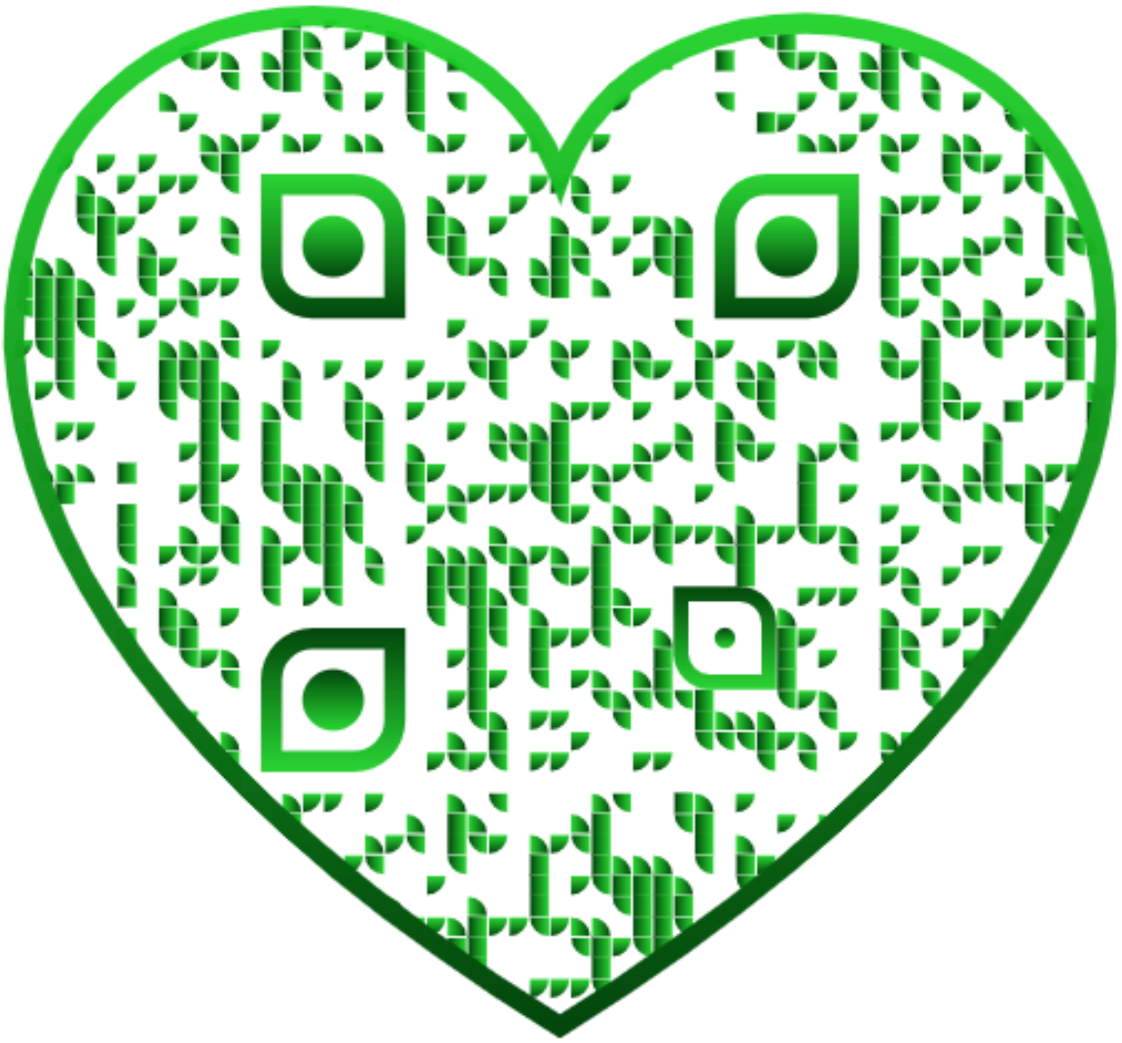


Your Definitive Source of Energy Center Knowledge for Health, Happiness, and Spiritual Evolution

CYNDI DALE



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INTRODUCTION

IF THE STARS should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore…

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

I often think of the chakras as stars that descended to earth and embedded in our human form. In some ways, the story of chakras is similar to that of the stars. As Emerson implies, their presence can be overlooked, ignored, or assumed simply because they are content to exist, seen or unseen, as surely as day follows night. But to explore the chakras is to investigate one of the truly great tales of the universe. I have spent years uncovering its many twists and turns, an array of stories enfolded within the larger tale. I wrote this book to present a compendium of these stories pulled together into a single source, a definitive storybook about chakras.

Chakras are energy centers in our bodies that, when perceived by those of us who are blessed to be able to see them, look like wheels of light spinning in and around the body—stars in miniature. Chakras are also "subtle" structures, meaning that, in many ways, they operate under the radar of most people's perception, on a psychic or spiritual level. But they are also intricately intertwined with our physical and emotional capacities. As key parts of a greater subtle energetic anatomy that you will learn about in this book, they have no less important a job to do than to manage all levels of our existence.

Chakras have been studied by hundreds of cultures over thousands of years. These dynamic energy centers are linked with myriad aspects of our being, from the body's electrical system—measurable to an extent with diagnostic and other medical devices—to subtler categories of vibration such as colors, sounds, and elements. I call this gigantic basket of chakra ideas—and especially the practices associated with them—"chakra medicine." This term

honors the traditional meaning of medicine: the sum total of all knowledge, skills, theories, and practices we can engage in to increase our well-being. Because chakras manage all aspects of life, they can be seen as the key to health, happiness, and prosperity.

Chakras have been a subject of study by so many diverse peoples and for so long that writing a book about chakras could take forever—a never-ending account that starts in the early mists of time and slips over the horizon ahead. I have dedicated myself to putting two covers on this eternal story, to serve as markers; hence, I have aimed to make this book a comprehensive compilation of the knowledge of chakras and chakra medicine as it exists today, drawing from sources worldwide, beginning with the ancients and adding information of my own that I have gained through extensive study and my energy healing practice.

But never fear: we will unfold this massive tale in bite-sized pieces. The information I will share begins at a basic level and grows in complexity. It is, therefore, an invitation to learn the fundamentals of "all things chakras" and then go deeper, ever deeper. Eventually, through your own explorations, I hope that you will add your own chakra discoveries to our shared wisdom base.

As you travel though this book, you'll discover that I continually return to the theme I already introduced: that the chakras in our bodies can be compared to the stars in our galaxy. I enjoy this beautiful metaphor, but as you dive into the discussions of the nature of energy in later chapters, you will see that this connection is more than symbolic. Like our feelings about the stars, chakras operate at all levels, and most practitioners would agree that they are ultimately spiritual, pointing the way to our souls' dreams.

I'll start by covering the most fundamental aspects of the chakras and how they perform; this will be the subject of chapters 1 through 15. I open part 1 with a question: what is a chakra? This entire book has been written to fully answer that question, but I will first answer it in basic terms. I'll include a thumbnail sketch of the history of chakra-related ideas, spanning civilizations and eras, as well as a review of ancient Hindu ideas about energy, as the

venerable Hindu system is one of the best known today. This information will help you set your discovery of chakras in a chronological context and reveal the mindset upon which all modern data has been built. Later in the book we'll explore these Hindu roots in much greater depth.

Next I'll outline scientific thought about the nature of energy. After all, as I mentioned, chakras are essentially energy centers, so it is helpful to get a refresher on what we have learned about the physics of energy. Again, this will be a brief backgrounder that I will expand upon later in the book.

As you'll soon discover, chakras are powerful tools for spiritual transformation. While they do play physical and psychological roles in our lives, ultimately chakras encourage spiritual growth. To begin orienting you to this aspect, I'll briefly describe an energetic force that awakens the chakras and paves the way toward enlightenment. This force is called kundalini energy.

A thorough understanding of chakras requires many more and much deeper layers of understanding, including an exploration of the nature of the energy in our bodies; the psychological, intuitive, and physiological effects of the chakras; the imagery and symbolism people have associated with them; and both traditional and contemporary views of chakras' aspects that include everything from spiritual icons to archetypes. We will begin this in-depth journey in Part 2.

Part 2 examines the most familiar chakra model: the Hindu system. We will travel through the seven in-body chakras in order, from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Our first goal is to look at how they function in the most fundamental of ways: physically and psychologically. We also will begin to add the layers of knowledge needed for a fuller picture: Sanskrit names, purpose, color, associated gland, and the part of the body that each chakra manages. I'll outline practical considerations, including related diseases and psychological functions, and move into more esoteric topics such as the gods and goddesses that reign within each bodily star. Symbols, archetypes, intuitive abilities, and explorations of secondary chakras, as well as other features, help round out our chakra profiles.

We then turn the corner to engage in Part 3, Fundamentals of Chakra Medicine. Here you will learn chakra medicine procedures and techniques. The first chapter in this part introduces the concept of chakra medicine: practices you can follow to work with chakras for greater health and well-being. You will learn various ways chakras can assist you, and I'll provide a plethora of processes you can use to do everything from locating your chakras to clearing and balancing them. Practices are loosely organized into Western and Eastern approaches.

Then it will be time to walk through the next doorway and into Section 2, Chakras in Depth: Historical, Scientific, and Cross-Cultural Understandings. Up to this point, you will have spent your time with the book learning and enjoying all the basics of chakra methodology as if peering through a telescope into the great night sky. Section 2 is the equivalent of getting into a spaceship and actually flying to those stars, carrying precise equipment such as spiritual treatises, finely tuned microscopes, and geographic maps. You will embark upon a thorough review of the history of chakra concepts, examining Vedic, tantric, and yogic chakra legends stretching as far back as 12,000 BCE. This history, which we'll cover in Part 4, will prepare you for part 5: The Science of Subtle Energy.

Part 5 kicks off with a primer on physical and subtle energy that reviews relevant classical and quantum physics and all things scientific about the nature of energy. With a better understanding of the energetic scenery in which chakras grow, you will be ready to picture chakras within their larger familial structure: your entire energetic anatomy. To truly work with chakras, you must also place them within the physical body, which you will examine to better understand the chakras' unique structure. Finally, you will devote your time to the scientific explanation of kundalini, the force that activates the chakras.

Then it's around the world you go, plunging into a deeply meaningful odyssey in Parts 6 through 8. Chakras are not exclusively Hindu in origin; they have appeared in jungles, deserts, mountains, and seasides around the world and across time. In addition, they are the subject of modern academic,

spiritual, and philosophical disciplines. Dozens of chakra systems are outlined and explained within the context of their spiritual and cultural surroundings. On this around-the-world tour, you will visit Asia, discover the ancient chakra systems of Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas, and investigate modern Western chakra systems.

Unique and contemporary chakra concepts and systems are the subject of Part 9, Chakras Et Cetera: Natural and Unusual Chakras, coverage of the relationship between chakras and the earth, animals, and skies, as well as an analaysis of contemporary and emerging chakra systems. Does the earth itself have chakras? What about animals? This fascinating review is followed by a one-two-three of recent and unusual chakras that are just making their way into our common chakra medicine bag.

As will become clear throughout your pilgrimage, chakras are nothing new—and they are always new; we never complete our chakra adventure. These points of light touch every aspect of our lives as embodied reflections of the starry sky we gaze upon when we count our blessings.

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SECTION 1

Chakra Fundamentals and Basic Practices

There is room in the heart for all the affections, as there is room in heaven for all the stars.

Victor Hugo

Over the ages, chakras have been described in hundreds of ways. As you'll discover, they have been depicted as chariot wheels, bodily plexuses, psychological gateways, energetic centers, spiritual powers, and more. At one level every assertion is true, and the seeker of truth about chakras will examine every bit of data available (which is why this book is so large). As an analogy, those who seek to understand the heavens look at everything in the sky. We can't understand the complexity of the cosmos, however, unless we comprehend the basics. The same is true of chakras, which is why section 1 features fundamental chakra philosophies and practices.

Part 1 starts with a bird's-eye view of chakras, briefly touching on the definition, history, science, and functions of the chakras and their other energetic cohorts. Kundalini is also investigated, as this energetic sidekick makes sure that chakras and other energetic structures operate fully on every level, including physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Part 2 is highly detailed, extensively showcasing the Hindu chakra system. Often called the classic chakra system, this seven-chakra system is the most well known and, because of this, arguably the most fully developed. You can

put your newfound knowledge to immediate use in Part 3, which showcases chakra-based exercises and techniques. These chakra medicine practices are universal and will also help you benefit from the cross-cultural chakra systems covered in Parts 6–8, found in Section 2.

Just as there is room in the heavens for all the stars, so is there room in the seeker's mind for all the available knowledge that exists on chakras; but first, the groundwork.

[contents]

What Are Chakras?

A Pocket Guide to Your Body's Points of Light

Did you say the stars were worlds…?

Thomas Hardy

There are worlds within worlds, most of which we cannot perceive with our naked senses. Within our bodies there are cells, and within those cells are an array of component parts. Within each of these are molecules and a humming universe of atoms and subatomic particles. Yet of all the invisible worlds we can investigate and ponder, I find the energy bodies that lie within and around us the most exciting of all, for they are vibrant, like the stars in the sky, and they are part of us. They make us shine. They are vital to our health, happiness, and spiritual evolution.

Many scientists and doctors understand the human body only as a conglomeration of tissues, organs, and cells. All of these are localized, meaning they exist where we expect to find them in a single identifiable place, and can be measured using current technology. There are aspects of us, however, that are not localized and that are composed of, lie within, or emanate fields of energy that are harder to measure or can't be measured at all. This is subtle energy.

The most magical of these cosmic forces is the chakra. With its story first told in ancient civilizations and its substantiation in modern science, the chakra is the most powerful energetic force within and around the body,

useful for performing healing, attracting what we need, obtaining guidance, and expanding and elevating our consciousness.

Chakras: One of the Body's Three Subtle Energy Systems

A chakra is a metaphysical, or "more than physical," subtle energy center. Subtle energy runs at vibrations outside and beyond those of the physical world. This means we cannot see, touch, hear, or otherwise perceive subtle energy through our physical senses. Nonetheless, subtle energy is all around us. It is the energy that pulses within solid ground and gives direction to our breath. It percolates our coffee, propels our thoughts, flaps the butterfly's wings, and gives oomph to our emotions. All solid matter incorporates subtle energy, and some scientists believe solid matter is even formed by subtle energy.

Compared to physical energy, subtle energy is more like air than clay. Like air, it is present everywhere. Like air, it is vital to our well-being. It is actually the fundamental force that makes life and living possible. And also like air, it follows a set of rules and principles and can be organized systematically.

The chakras are one of three main systems that organize subtle energy for human use. These amazing energy bodies actually convert physical energy into subtle energy and vice versa, enabling us to reach into the realms of the subtle universe for support in living our best life. They accomplish this through interaction with the other two main subtle systems: the meridians/nadis and auric fields.

The term *meridian* is typically used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to describe the channels in our bodies through which subtle energy flows, while *nadi* is an East Indian term for the components of a very similar system. Some people believe these channels are one and the same, while others think they are different. We will explore this disagreement in section 2.

Auric fields are one of many sets of energy fields generated by the subtle body. Moving in a progression up the body, like the chakras, they look like

bands of energy that start close to the body and move farther away; each level links to a chakra. They are similar to the electromagnetic fields generated by the physical body, yet they are a step up in vibration.

All three structures interact, which is a topic for more in-depth discussion further along in the book. The important thing to know for now is that together these three main systems form our subtle energetic anatomy. Because the chakras cooperate with so many parts of us—including the subtle meridians/nadis and auric fields as well as body, mind, and soul—if we are to fully understand their beauty and power, we must explore all of these areas. And we will do so together in this book.

All cultural systems are in agreement that we have more than one chakra: some identify only two chakras, while others catalogue dozens of them. Later in the book we will gain an overview of numerous chakra systems around the world and explore the various ways in which different cultures have perceived these pulsing and vibrant energy centers. But here, in part 1, we will concentrate on laying the groundwork for understanding all the systems and everything else about chakras there is to know. Part 1, then, is a pocket guide to chakras, designed to launch you on the exciting odyssey that awaits you.

Chapter 1 provides a quick snapshot of the chakras and investigates the differences between physical, subtle, and other types of energies. These "big picture" discussions will form the basis of your ultimate understanding of the exquisite intricacies of the chakra system.

Also in chapter 1, I'll outline the similar ingredients and qualities the seven main chakras share that most cultures agree upon: the fact that each regulates vital physical, psychological, and spiritual concerns. But, as you will learn, they do much, much more than this. They also assist us with fully embracing our physical needs while attaining the wisdom necessary to become enlightened beings, filled with unlimited understanding and love. Chapter 1 will also briefly investigate the history and science of the chakras, including some of the Hindu beliefs that have built our chakra knowledge. I will also describe some of the attributes often affiliated with the chakras, including

matters about the structure and spin of this swirling organ of light. My goal is to prepare you for part 2 and a deep dive into the seven in-body Hindu chakras.

Chapter 2 explores the mysterious world of kundalini, one of the many types of subtle energies that enable us to fully activate and make use of the chakras' powers. This chapter draws heavily from the ancient Hindu understanding of chakras and how they operate, and our discussion will be fairly basic. But there is much more to learn about kundalini energy, and we will return to it in section 2, updating our understanding with the views of esoteric explorers and scientists.

Altogether, my aim in this section of the book is to establish a framework of understanding that the rest of the book will fill in, giving you a high-level introduction to the truly mysterious worlds within worlds that are your chakras.

Now let us begin.

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Your Spinning Wheels of Light

> THE QUESTION IS not what you look at, but what you see.
>
> HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Many of us are trained to discount anything we cannot see, touch, or hear. Maybe we think this approach will keep us safely tethered to the world we believe we know. But while we can't see the air, we know it's there; we even know we can't survive without it. We cannot touch the smile in another's heart or hear the worries that plague another's mind, yet we know that all these things—and so much more—exist. Likewise, we know there is more to ourselves than the physical image we see in the mirror.

Thousands of years ago, our ancestors didn't require machines to substantiate someone's claim that they felt sick. They didn't look up sketches of the body in *Gray's Anatomy* to track the flow of fluids. It would not have occurred to them to mock someone who had heard from Spirit in a dream. They trusted their spiritual senses as much as—if not more than—their physical ones, and their understanding of the human body, mind, and soul reflected this advanced consciousness.

Our ancestors knew that there were energy bodies associated with their physical bodies—subtler dimensions of the miraculous gift of life. East Indian culture called these energy bodies chakras, or cakras. This is only one of the chakras' many names, as chakras appear in different forms in cultures around the world. Yet no matter how such descriptions differ, chakras are defined in the same way: as a system of subtle energy transformers—similar to the common electrical devices that control electrical energy—operating within a network of systems that compose our subtle energetic anatomy. In

other words, they constitute a vital part of us that can and does influence both subtle (or psychic) energy and physical energy.

This introductory chapter's goal is to provide you with a basic understanding of the chakras and what types of issues each addresses physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Because there is such a wide variety of cultural systems that acknowledge chakras, I have narrowed the scope of this chapter to present only a quick overview of the seven basic in-body chakras that most systems agree upon, as well as the most basic ways of understanding these chakras.

I first offer a simple yet thorough explanation about chakras, moving into explorations of energy—the chakras' area of expertise. A brief overview of the science of the chakras will enable an intelligent discussion about how chakras help us meet our physical, psychological, and spiritual goals.

As background information, I will also include a brief history of the chakra system, the use of subtle energy across cultures, and an exploration of various East Indian energy concepts. And to give you a framework for the chakras, I'll include an introductory meeting with the chakra system's kin: the meridians and energetic fields. Along the way, you'll learn about several of the essential factors related to the chakras, such as elements, colors, locations, tones, and more, all of which will reappear in individual sections that apply this information to each of the seven in-body chakras.

As you embrace these broad but vital ideas about the chakras, let yourself imagine what might happen if you could really understand these mini universes within and around you. What if you could unlock their miraculous powers? Think of what you'd understand about reality. Think how powerfully you could transform reality. Imagine how much more of yourself you could ultimately become. As you'll discover, the overarching beauty of these rainbow-colored vortexes is the invitation they extend to us to continually develop—to become people who have embraced the truth of Vanna Bonta's statement in her book *Flight: A Quantum Fiction Novel*: "The illusion is we are only physical."[1]

Chakras prove we are much, much more than that.

What Is a Chakra?

At the simplest level, a chakra is an organ of the body that manages energy, just as the heart manages the circulatory system and the lungs manage respiration. There are major and minor chakras—chakras with lots of jobs to do and chakras with smaller tasks to accomplish. Most people work with a seven-chakra system, primarily Hindu in origin, where the chakras emanate from the spine or the head, although there are hundreds of variations, as you will discover in this book. While you won't read about them in this chapter, you should know that several cultures place upward of dozens of chakras in and around the body, formulating a true network of light that encircles us. As people through time have done when looking at the placement of stars in the sky, over thousands of years, those who have perceived these chakra locations and drawn conclusions about them have organized them into constellations similar to those we use in astronomy. We refer to these as chakra systems, and they are embedded in a greater subtle- energy anatomy.

Chakras are a lot like the physical organs in your body. They are made of energy, they are professionally employed (i.e., have important jobs to do), and they work together with other organs like the cogs and wheels of a single machine. Yet a chakra's job goes beyond the concrete tasks you might find on a physical organ's job description. Each chakra focuses a unique physical, psychological, and spiritual energy in the body to direct and serve your well-being. Each chakra manages an area of your physical body and a set of emotional and mental concerns, runs specific intuitive or psychic gifts, and highlights aspects of your special spiritual identity.

A chakra's job description is astonishingly broad, encompassing all levels of your being, and there are several reasons for this. While I have compared chakras to physical organs in the body, to best understand their powerful abilities, erase that image of a physical organ for now. Tuck away the illustration of your liver or spleen and instead picture a swirling vortex made of light, narrowing down to a point like a tornado; that's the best image to hold of a chakra. To those who perceive energies that are invisible to the

naked eye, a chakra looks like a rapidly spinning wheel of swirling light, moving so fast that, were it visible, we would perceive it as a blur. It can swirl clockwise or counterclockwise. If we slowed down its lightning-fast movement, however, we would see it as a whirlpool that has twirling vortexes embodied within it.

Each of the major chakras, however, contains a different number of these vortexes. If we were to slow the movement of a major chakra to utter stillness, the vortexes would resemble the tapered petals of a lotus flower. This is one of the reasons ancient East Indian mystics often compared chakras to lotus flowers, and the varying number of vortexes in each of the major chakras is why they associated a different number of petals with each one.[2]

Now take fourteen of these mini tornadoes—yes, fourteen—and picture seven of them emanating from the front side of your body and seven parallel tornadoes emitting from your body's back side, as shown in Illustration 1. Compare this image of the chakras to a lotus and your picture of the chakra system becomes more accurate.

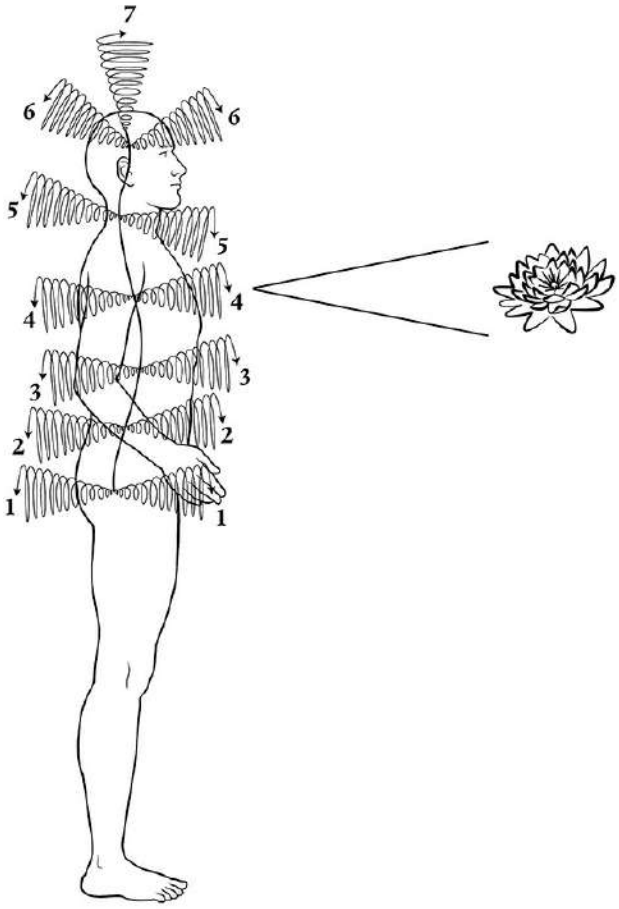


ILLUSTRATION 1—CHAKRAS AS VORTEXES: The main in-body chakras emanate from the back and front sides of the spine to extend beyond the physical body. Each is composed of a cluster of vortexes similar in shape to what you see in a whirlpool. Once the spin of a chakra is stilled, it reveals a lotuslike shape. At the center and deepest point of each chakra is a stemlike channel that connects the main in-body chakras to the spine, and through the spine to each other. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Every in-body chakra has a front and a back side, with each flowery vortex narrowing to a point in the spine or head, specifically in nerve plexuses in the hips (first chakra), abdomen (second chakra), solar plexus (third chakra), heart (fourth chakra), throat (fifth chakra), forehead (sixth chakra), and top of the head (seventh chakra). The names of these chakras in the Hindu pantheon are Sanskrit words: muladhara, svadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddha, ajña, and sahasrara, from first to seventh chakra, respectively. Anchored in the physical body, each performs highly physical functions, such as running that area of the spine or head or managing the organs in the surrounding area.

Each chakra is associated with a long list of factors. These include (take a deep breath) the Sanskrit and other names, a bodily location, chakra purpose, chakra color, chakra age-related activation, a related endocrine gland, associated body parts and physical diseases, element, an action organ, vital breath, related diseases, psychological functions, archetype, personality profile, deficiencies and excesses, a sound, sound carrier or representative, number of lotuses, attribute, cosmic plane, goddess and god, planet, granthi, intuitive gifts, auric field, secondary chakras, and more. And the chakras' physical presence also allows them to draw on a special energy called kundalini to create health at every level and to encourage us toward spiritual transformation.

Chakra Structure

To continue refining the image of the chakras, let's take a closer look at chakra structure. They are not just vertical in orientation—points of light stacked one atop the other at strategic sites along your spine and head. Each occupies its own horizontal band of vibrating energy that extends outward from the body and that can be illuminated as color and sound. There are seven chakras—and seven bands of colors and sounds—that define both the energy band and the chakra. As part of their job description, chakras manage whatever comes their way that matches their own energy band.

There are four additional considerations regarding chakra structure. If you understand these aspects—the chakra substructures—you will have a much clearer image of the chakra and what it can do. It will also help you better understand a chakra's spin and why chakra experts always ask whether the chakra is spinning clockwise or counterclockwise and how energy is flowing within it. Further information about the science behind all of this can be found in chapter 21, "The Science and Structure of Chakras."

Basically a chakra can be understood in terms of its location: where it lies along the vertical axis of the body, where its energetic field extends to the left and right sides of the body (the chakras themselves have left and right sides as well), and its extension outward to the front and back. The fourth

determinant, in my own experience, is that a chakra has an inner and outer wheel.

The lower a chakra is in relation to the physical body, the lower its vibration and the more material its effects. The higher it is in correspondence to the physical body, the higher its vibration and the more spiritual its effects. It is important to stress that "low" and "high" are not judgments. We are equally human and divine. Metaphysically, the lower chakras ensure our development as healthy human beings and the higher chakras ensure that we are ever-evolving spiritual beings. I think it is fitting that the heart is the center of our subtle energy system. All good things meet in the heart—in the center of love.

The major chakras are complicit in maintaining yin-yang balance in every area of our life. One of the ways they do this is by flowing energy appropriately to the left and right sides of the body. The left side of the body is feminine and is controlled by the right brain hemisphere, while the right side is masculine and is governed by the left brain hemisphere. One result of this differentiation is that the left side of the body receives energy and the right side transmits it. Some esoteric scientists believe that because of this, the energies flowing in through the left side are processed through the metaphysical energy systems, including the chakras and meridians, and are then projected from the right side of the body. Psychologically, this would also mean that the left side acts as a kind of filtering system, "deciding" what external energies we will engage with, while the right side generates more intense electromagnetic waves and shares information about us with the world. In metaphysical terms, energy flows into our left side, traverses the meridian system, and is processed in the chakras. The chakras then project energy into the environment through the right side of the body.[3] Seen in this way, chakras help maintain an important flow of physical and subtle energy into and through the body.

This pattern of flow is also found in the way each individual chakra functions. For the most part, the left side of the chakra is yin and managed by the right brain hemisphere, and the right side of the chakra is yang and

controlled by the left brain hemisphere. Many believe that energy enters through the left side of the chakra and pours out through the right in a circular, twisting motion. This motion is amplified by the energy that is already pouring through the center of the chakra at what is, in effect, a crossroads of sorts, with energy moving vertically (from both the bottom up and the top down) and horizontally (from front to back and back to front). The result of the convergence of all of these energetic forces is lightning-fast spin: a whirling wheel containing a number of hubs within it.

The number of hubs a chakra contains has long been symbolized by the numbers of lotus petals seen in Hindu representations of the chakras, and it differs from chakra to chakra. This number is based on the energetic frequency of the chakra and how many streams of energy are flowing into it. There are complicated formulas for adding up these streams, depending on the system we're looking at. For instance, some systems, such as the Kalachakra system described in chapter 24, describe various winds that flow through the body, affecting the spin and therefore the resulting number of lotus petals. Other systems differ slightly. I've included explanations of chakra spin and number of hubs or petals in chapter 21.[4]

In relation to the spine, the front and back sides of the chakras each serve their own vital function. As do many subtle energy professionals, I believe that the back side receives energy and the front side emanates it. I also relate the back side to the subconscious, the unconscious, and the soul; this means that energy entering through the back side is filtered depending on soul (past life) issues, as well as inner child and unconscious beliefs. The front sides of the chakras help us create the reality we move forward into and share information about ourselves with the external world.

The direction of a chakra's spin, clockwise or counterclockwise, is often described by looking at its front or back side. Typically it is determined through the observer's point of view; that is, how someone looking at the front of the body would distinguish a clockwise spin, moving to the right, from a counterclockwise spin, moving to the left. Some practitioners, however, determine the spin through the eyes of the subject. The exercises I

will present in Part 3 circumvent this issue on a practical level by helping you figure out which direction is most natural for you.

Are you getting a sense of the tremendous amount of movement taking place in these powerful energy transducers' multidirectional movement? Well, I believe (as do many other professionals) that chakras have yet another aspect—an inner and an outer sphere, or circle—which rotate in relation to one another.

There are many theories about the existence of an inner and outer sphere for each chakra. I have heard teachers suggest that the inner sphere manages one's inner life and the outer, one's relationship with the world. As I will share in chapter 32, in the discussion of my own twelve-chakra system, I believe our essential spirit programs the inner wheel during conception. It holds the keys to our dharma: our perfect path and most righteous personality. The outer wheel, which is also programmed during conception, assists us with adapting to our family system and the culture around us. It holds our soul's karma and the beliefs, emotions, and values that enable us to fit in to the world we are entering; karma is the sum total of our experiences in this and former lives, often determining our decisions and life events. Many of the beliefs the outer wheel holds are self-destructive, underlying the sense of separation—rather than the truth of interconnectivity—that causes life challenges.

What Does the Spin of a Healthy Chakra Look Like?

A chakra's spin is a complex interaction that enables the conversion of energy—from subtle to physical and vice versa. Most systems propose that a healthy, balanced chakra spins clockwise and that an unhealthy chakra spins counterclockwise, and sometimes this statement is true. Sometimes.

In my own work, I have seen that chakras usually flow clockwise when they are taking in energy and counterclockwise when they are releasing it. This isn't always the case, however; sometimes the opposite is true, depending on the person or the situation. No matter which scenario applies, when chakra rotation is compromised, perhaps because of disease or exposure to emotional

abuse, that chakra will become distorted; its spin disturbed, it will literally warp. This distortion can also affect—or infect—the energy passed along to its neighboring chakras. Therefore, a disturbed chakra can psychically appear weak, misshapen (not circular), or too open.

I caution against using chakra spin to determine the true health of a chakra. A clockwise-spinning chakra can take in unhealthy energy as easily as healthy energy. The counterclockwise spin might also be necessary to release energy, such as toxic microbes, emotions, or the energies of others. And yes, it is just as likely that it might needlessly release positive energy.

One common scenario is that chakras move clockwise most of the time, but at a certain time of day they temporarily shift counterclockwise to let go of negativity. As well, during menstruation several chakras twirl counterclockwise, letting go of the monthly buildup of emotions and tissues until the woman's period is over. During times of great grief, chakras often move in a variety of ways, as if confused by the emotional turmoil. Chakra spins can also cease altogether if a person is stuck in some way or overwhelmed.

The other issue with chakra spin relates to the outer versus inner wheels. In general, all instruments used to assess chakra spin, including intuition, assess only the outer wheel, which is in constant flux because it is karmic rather than dharmic in nature. Whereas karma decides events based on the past, dharma constitutes principles of a higher nature, allowing for forgiveness and love, not only retribution and cause/effect. The inner wheel flows consistently with our higher needs and can only be accessed in a deep meditative state. Upon reaching this state of mind, concentrating on an inner wheel can actually correct any distorted external wheel spin.

In general, I would agree that with a healthy chakra we see a wide, circular, clockwise, and open spin. But that is only a rule of thumb—and even then, only as it relates to most people. Some individuals are simply contrary. These amazing people, who are usually shamanic and mystical by nature, often operate with counterclockwise chakras. Several exercises in Part 3 will help

you assess and balance chakra spin as well as determine your own healthiest chakra spin direction.

As I hope you are beginning to see, chakras truly are energy organs, making use of all types of energy vibrations—including color, sound, spin, and more—to enhance every part of our existence. To truly understand these bodily stars, we need to better understand energy itself and the chakras' interaction with it. This is a big undertaking—and a fascinating subject—but for now we'll take a bite-sized piece and explore just the basics.

The Three Main Functions of the Chakras

Whether or not our chakras have been fully activated by kundalini energy—a process you will learn much more about later in these pages—they perform three gigantic roles. Understanding these three functions, as well as some of the science involved, will help you see how chakras accomplish their goals. A little further on I'll offer some specific examples of how I have seen these functions play out among my clients.

1. **Physical Processing:** Many chakras have a bodily location, including an attachment to a nerve plexus and/or an endocrine gland, and all of them manage a certain part of the body. They can also be described as colors and sounds, which are related to the vibratory bands they both operate within and emanate, so they relate to our physical senses as well.
2. **Psychological Processing:** Each chakra interacts with—and creates—psychological constructs that affect our well-being. This processing takes place in the realm of beliefs and feelings.
3. **Spiritual Processing:** Each chakra contributes to our spiritual well-being and development, adding a layer of consciousness to our maturing sense of self. Every chakra also serves as a channel for a specific psychic ability.

Before I go into each of these further, there are a couple other important things you should know about chakras:

Chakras Remember

Chakras not only process energy related to these three roles, but they record or hold related information as well. For instance, a chakra will receive incoming subtle and physical information about a friend and help your physical body, psychological self, and higher self respond to this information. Then it will remember, as a mini brain might, what conclusions you drew and how your friend reacted. Because chakras start this role as soon as the body is conceived, they can be seen as memory banks for all aspects of your life.

Chakras Are Energy Transformers

Most of the time we go about the activities of our lives generally unaware that an extraordinary alchemy is taking place within us via the chakras. You see, chakras go a step beyond the exchange of energy. They are actually energy transformers or transducers, which means they can change subtle energy into physical energy and vice versa. Think about that! This means that a chakra could hold the key to blinking a tumor out of your body or turning that wish for a sports car you've been harboring into a red Porsche. This transformer function is key to how chakras carry out their three main functions, which we will now look at more closely.

1. Chakras Process Physically

Every chakra has a physical location inside or atop the body, even though we can't corroborate this fact with X-ray machines or most other commonly accepted technologies. It would be easy to think that a chakra's physical duties relate to a particular body part because of its physical link to it. It's more accurate to say that a chakra governs a certain part of the body because their vibrational frequencies match.

Every chakra functions on a different vibratory plane from other chakras, one that is generated from and interacts with a particular level or layer of the body. These layers progress along the upright body's vertical axis as horizontal vibratory bands.

Chakras are ascribed colors and sounds—qualities we are accustomed to perceiving with our physical senses—because these vibratory bands can be most easily explained and understood in these ways. Originally, the ancients used their intuition to figure out the colors of the chakras. Because the seven in-body chakras range from red through the visible spectrum to white, the chakra system is often compared to a rainbow. It has been called a rainbow bridge and is said to awaken kundalini, the rainbow serpent. You can see this rainbow bridge in the Color Insert and in Illustration 2 in black and white.

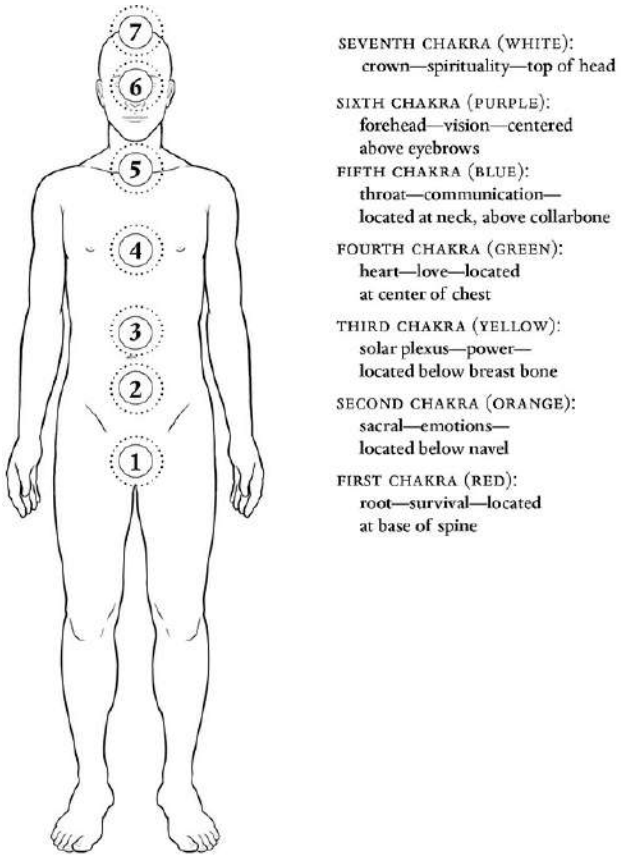


ILLUSTRATION 2—THE LOCATION AND BASIC FUNCTIONS OF THE IN-BODY CHAKRAS: The in-body chakra system is often seen as a rainbow, with each chakra progressing through the seven colors of the rainbow, from the first chakra in the hips to the seventh chakra in the top of the head. Every one of these core chakras is linked to a major nerve plexus and regulates core physical, psychological, and spiritual functions. Shown here is the color and location of each chakra and its primary function. (See also the Color Insert.) ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

This ultrasensitivity of the chakras makes them very effective at managing our physical concerns. Each chakra is linked with a primal element and monitors the physical issues, tissues, organs, and characteristics within or near its vibratory band. Quite specifically, each chakra is associated with a bodily area, which is linked to a vertebral region or spinal nerve plexus and an endocrine gland. For instance, the Hindu first chakra—located in the hips, through the coccygeal plexus and the adrenal glands—is CEO of the hips, coccygeal vertebrae, anus, bladder, rectum, and adjacent body parts. Have a bladder infection? You might have an energetic issue affecting your first chakra; as a result, your first chakra is playing havoc with your bladder. Conversely, a problem in your bladder will create a subtle energy shift in your first chakra. Chakras are always yin and yang: what happens in physical reality affects them, and what occurs in a chakra alters physical reality.

An example from my practice that comes to mind is of a male client who had crippling hip pain, for no apparent reason, that had started a few months previously. He had been to a dozen medical professionals to figure out the cause, from allopathic to alternative, all to no avail. When he showed up for a chakra healing, I was his last hope.

Hips regulate the first chakra, so I knew we were working with issues related to safety, security, and physicality. After assessing that chakra, my intuitive sense was that my client had been physically injured at some time in his life but couldn't remember the event. I guided him into a calm state and asked him if he could recall any stories about being injured. I directed him to focus on the first chakra area of his body as he thought it over.

He vaguely recalled that when he was about three, he had been in a car accident and that his pelvis had been jammed in his car seat. Being three, he was soon running around without a care in the world. It occurred to him that his son had recently turned three years of age, and that was when the hip pain had started. He remarked that he thought that was odd.

I didn't think it was odd at all. Chakras hold the memory of what has gone before, and recurring trauma, emotional situations, or even our child attaining the age at which an event occurred for us can be triggered to respond in some

way. That's how energy works: like triggers like. I supported my client in sensing the physical pain he had ignored when he was three and used some of the techniques I will cover in Part 3 to release the pain. After just a few minutes, the pain cleared up and never came back.

2. Chakras Process Psychologically

Chakras might as well call themselves "mini Dr. Freuds" because each chakra manages a particular set of beliefs and the feelings related to those beliefs. Beliefs and feelings underlie our psychological issues and profile.

For instance, the Hindu first chakra runs our beliefs about safety and security. Emotions related to these beliefs include sensing ourselves as loved, worthy, wanted, undesirable, rejected, or abandoned. Our fourth chakra holds our beliefs about love and corresponding feelings such as attraction, compassion, and gratitude.

A dysfunctional belief can inhibit the full function of a chakra, as can repressed or ignored feelings. Likewise, if we place our faith in self-destructive beliefs or express our feelings in harmful ways, the related chakra will become warped or distorted. Chakras injured because of emotional issues can impact our physical health. I'll explore this further in the section called "Chakras Clear Out Negative Beliefs and Emotions" in chapter 11.

There is one more consideration to add to our growing knowledge base about chakras and psychological concerns: the chakra developmental cycle, which I will describe in chapter 3. While we emerge from the womb with our chakras intact, they are awakened in sequence as we age. There are many systems describing this process, and each one slightly differs in terms of ages assigned to a chakra's activation. In the twelve-chakra system, for example, our first chakra is activated after conception through six months of age. Our second chakra becomes operational between six months and two and a half years of age, and so on. During these phases, a chakra "locks in" the conclusions we have made about our environment.

For instance, imagine that your mother hadn't wanted you to be born. The belief of being unwanted and the resulting feelings of rejection might lock

into your first chakra and continue to affect you as time goes on, flavoring your choice of a mate, job, and personal health care (or lack thereof). One of the reasons we perform chakra healing and clearing (terms I will define in Part 3) is to release negative psychological programs and create more life-enhancing ones.

The relationships between our chakras, lives, and psychological issues will be discussed at great length throughout this book, but I'd first like to provide an example of the close connection between our emotions and chakras, and, in this case, of the physical body as well, once again exploring the first chakra.

I once worked with a woman who had started waking up at five o'clock every morning with crippling coccygeal pain—seemingly out of the blue. Doctors had asserted there was nothing wrong, despite the pain being so severe that it left her incapacitated for several hours. The other major issue in her life was her mother's imminent death.

I knew that we were most likely dealing with a first chakra issue from a child development point of view (an approach we'll cover in part 2), which the first chakra activates when we are in the womb. It also holds issues incurred physically or that arise because we don't feel safe, which can happen at any time in our life, but I instinctively believed we were dealing with a very young—or old—event. I asked my client if anything had happened to her mother when she was pregnant with her or even right after birth.

"My mom said that she fell and broke her tailbone during the last week of her pregnancy because my dad yelled at her," my client told me. "They didn't have much money, and my father blamed her for getting pregnant and furthering the restrictions on the budget. And she told me it was a painful childbirth."

I suggested that my client's tiny body might have held the imprint of her mother's fall, leading her to unconsciously feel guilty for getting her mom "in trouble," with its attendant physical pain, and for causing so much stress to her father. The inner thinking goes like this: "Since I'm responsible for my mom's problems, I'll carry her pain."

Most likely, the body memories had been triggered because her mother was about to leave this plane and enter another one—a death for the daughter, a new life for the mother.

My client gasped. "I was born at five in the morning!" she recalled—exactly the time she awakened in pain every day. We spent some additional time discussing her feelings about her mother and her mother's upcoming death, as well as that inner sense of guilt and responsibility.

My client decided she didn't need to carry her mother's pain in order to help her mother to the other side, and perhaps she had never needed to mirror it at all. After this session of working with her first chakra, the pain disappeared.

3. Chakras Process Spiritually

Ultimately each chakra is a rung on the ladder to enlightenment, which we could define as the ability to live in a state of spiritual truth, guided by insight. Achieving enlightenment is not easy; everything in life builds toward it, including pain, suffering, and hardship. This is why it's important to remember the advice Anne Lamott shares in *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*: "The road to enlightenment is long and difficult, and you should try not to forget snacks and magazines."[5]

While it doesn't exactly offer snacks and magazines, the chakra system is equipped with its own "Skype service" providing access to vital guidance and needed inspiration. Loaded within each chakra is an innate psychic ability or gift. These gifts include physical, emotional, and mental empathy; healing; the ability to intuitively hear and see information; and more. All of these subtle abilities help us receive spiritual guidance as well as disseminate psychic messages to the world.

Sometimes life events damage our natural psychic abilities, a fact that points to the holistic nature of a chakra. Our spiritual gifts can be positively or negatively affected by physical or psychological events and vice versa. For instance, physical abuse can close down our access to the first chakra's physical empathy, or the ability to sense what is occurring in another's body. It will now be hard for us to care about others or sense what they need. We

could also respond by cracking this chakra wide open, becoming too sensitive to others' physical experiences. This hypervigilance can leave us on constant alert, to the point of exhaustion. We might even go so far as to absorb others' physical issues, illnesses, or problems and manifest them through our own bodies. We will further explore the psychic gifts in several sections in this book, including the next chapter. For now, this story illustrates how powerfully spiritual energies can affect the chakras and vice versa.

I once worked with a teenager, whom I'll call John, who had stopped going to school three weeks before graduation from high school. "I get too anxious," he said. "I just can't sit there. I can't keep a thought in my head, and even though I try to think, I can't." I saw him a day before finals, his last chance to take and pass tests that would allow him to graduate. The extent of his anxiety would have been clear to anyone, reflected in physical twitches as he moved and spoke.

"Where do you feel the anxiety?" I asked, already knowing he was going to say his stomach, as my sense was that we were dealing with the third chakra. We pick up psychic data about others through our third chakra. On the positive side, this affinity enables us to sense others' motives and pick up on information that could be useful. On the downside, absorbing too much of other people's mental activity will overload our system and cause anxiety.

When John indicated his stomach, I asked if he often had butterflies, especially if he was around people who were nervous. The young man proceeded to recite situation after situation in which a friend of his, his sister, his mom, and others had been scared about something and he had responded in kind. I suggested that he was too open in this chakra and was picking up others' insecurities or fears. Could it be, I asked John, that right now he was oversensitive to his schoolmates' fear of graduation and the great beyond?

Immediately the young man stopped twitching and soberly said, "Wow, that makes sense." I often find that accurate information instills the kind of instant relief indicated by John's sudden calm state. After some more discussion, the teenager shared that his stomach problems—and anxiety—had started when

his father left his mom. “My mom would cry every night, she was so nervous about how she was going to support me and my sister.”

“Do you think you could have unconsciously decided to take on your mother’s doubts to alleviate *her* tension?” I asked. I also suggested that when he was around others who were experiencing strong uncertainty, he might automatically do the same.

“Bull’s-eye,” John said. From there, we used a number of chakra-clearing techniques to help him close down his third chakra so it was no longer susceptible to other people’s fears. He went to school that week, took his tests, and graduated with his class. As you can see, chakra medicine can affect us in the most unusual of ways.

Deeper into Chakras and Energy

If there is one thing to remember about the chakras, it is their essential job. Chakras are referred to as energy organs, points, or knots because they are energy experts. We perceive them as centrifuges of light because they do indeed light us up. They do this because they manage energy.

Energy is information that moves—plain and simple. And everything in the world is made of energy. Thus there is information in a cup of tea that makes sure you are drinking tea rather than coffee. No matter how still you hold your cup, the saucer, liquid, and cup itself are always vibrating; hence, energy is information in constant movement. Chakras are special in that they interact with several different types of energy.

You’ll learn a lot about energy in this book, and not only because of this central truth that everything is made of energy. Unlike objects like teacups and organs like the heart, chakras work with really fast-moving energy (called subtle or psychic energy), really slow-moving energy (called physical or sensory energy), and everything else in between and beyond. For instance, chakras interact with a type of energy called causal energy, which serves as a blueprint for both subtle and physical energy. You can explore these and other energies further in Section 2.

Because they process subtle or psychic energy, chakras are known as spiritual centers. They access higher spiritual energies, inviting a continual expansion of consciousness. Even their physical activity is more than mundane. Some scientists now theorize that our bodies are actually interdimensional and simultaneously occupy at least ten dimensions that surround and interpenetrate us.[6] These various dimensions build upon one another, as you'll see in the brief description of them that follows.

The first dimension is length and can be pictured as a straight line. The second, width, could be thought of as a very thin plane. The third dimension adds depth and depicts the one we live in, which we call 3-D. The next seven dimensions are more intangible, with the fourth represented by time and symbolized by a timeline. The fifth and sixth dimensions deal with possible futures we could have, of which one is chosen through choice; if you master these two dimensions, you could travel back in time and visit different futures, like traveling the varied paths of a branching tree.

Dimensions seven through ten deal with universes and are an extension of the preceding two dimensions except that instead of a person branching into the past and future, we find that universes do the same. This means that many possible universes are continually being created. Finally, the tenth dimension is the sum of all universes and their possible outcomes.[7]

Chakras literally help us operate on every level of reality, seen and unseen, many of which have been codified by esoteric professionals and are explored in Section 2. You could say that chakras operate as elevators between all the dimensions, taking us from the straight line of practical reality into the extensions of all possible realities. This fact begs the question of exactly what the chakras are influencing—and suggests that the answer is "everything." In fact, one of the more famous energy expert pioneers, Dr. Richard Gerber, author of *Vibrational Medicine*, sees it precisely this way. If chakras are downshifting higher-vibration energy into lower-vibration energy, they are also turning these higher-dimensional energies, which we can't normally perceive through our physical senses, into hormonal, biological, and cellular energy.[8]

As a system, the chakras operate within the greater framework of the energetic anatomy, or the sum total of all the subtle energy structures that compose the invisible self. As I mentioned earlier, the other two main players in this larger framework are the energy channels—the meridians and nadis—and the energetic fields, which include the auric fields.

The best way to place chakras within this energetic landscape is to imagine your chakras as islands populating your body, maybe a few even dotted outside of it. The energy channels flow like rivers through your body, transporting energy to where it is needed. Many of them flow through your chakras as well, delivering and taking away "parcels."

The body and the chakras emanate fields that broadcast energy, sometimes in the form of messages, into the world. These same fields are programmed to let certain energies in as well, where they can be deciphered by the chakras. Yet other energetic structures, such as planes of reality and more, also interact with the chakras, establishing chakras as important control centers in the middle of this subtle story—a story that involves energies beyond those I have described and that can be explained by two different forms of science: classical and quantum.

A Scientific Perspective of Chakras

Science explains chakras in many different ways. The most basic level is biological. Chakras interact with our nervous system; as well, each chakra is associated with an endocrine gland. Chakras are therefore involved with our electromagnetic functions and our biochemistry, aspects of us that control everything from our bodily functions to our moods.

Another scientific perspective involves electromagnetic fields (EMF), which are composed of all the different speeds and wavelengths of light. We are actually a collection of oscillating fields of light, as are our chakras, which express the magnificence of this fact by operating on differently colored bands of frequencies. This is one of the reasons that most experts typically perceive the seven in-body chakras as particular colors—rainbow colors, in fact. The lowest in-body chakra is red and the highest is white; the

other colors of the rainbow are in between. For this reason, chakras are often referred to as a rainbow bridge. They constitute and reflect all the colors of the rainbow and every step of our existence—from physical manifestation to spiritual enlightenment.

Then there is the aspect of sound. Most ancient cultures also ascribed sounds to the chakras; in fact, there are often several sounds associated with each one. In the Hindu tradition, the chakra tones are called *bija,* or "seed sounds," and the fifty sounds within the Sanskrit language are spread out among all seven chakras. Some of these sounds are the seed, or core, tones of the chakras, while others are sounds associated with the petals that make up the chakras' lotus shapes.[9]

Sanskrit: Ancient Language of Beauty, Complexity, and Power

Sanskrit is considered to be the oldest written language in the world. It is associated with India and is at least six thousand years old but might even be older than that. Having some understanding of its complexity is vital to comprehending the people who used it and the rich tapestry of Vedic scripture.

The word Sanskrit comes from *sanskrita*, which means "refined" or "purified" and is the antonym, or opposite, of *prakita*, meaning "natural" or "vulgar." Sanskrit is the opposite of vulgar: beautiful and of a higher order. It is often called the language of the gods, as it is composed of primordial sounds developed systematically to track the natural progression of sounds made by the human mouth. (Interestingly, NASA and other institutions have considered using it as a computer language because its syntax is so perfect that it is almost impossible to use mistakenly.)

In total, the Sanskrit alphabet contains fifty letters. Some systems suggest there are forty letters, others think fifty-four, and there are yet other ideas about this, but my selection of a fifty-letter Sanskrit alphabet—which includes consonants, vowels, and semivowels—is based on the teaching of the American Sanskrit Institute. The thinking is that the earliest Sanskrit dialects were based on fifty letters, so this is the most appropriate system when we consider the ancient texts. As well, this number neatly divides so that each letter is associated with one of the petals on the first six chakras.[10] Incredibly, each letter also has a particular vibration and corresponds to an aspect of the Absolute.

Although there are only fifty letters, Sanskrit uses a mix of letters and sounds to create myriad possibilities. For instance, within it are sixty-five words for various forms of earth and sixty-seven words for water. There are two hundred fifty words to describe rainfall.

By adding the nasal "m" to any letter, we create a *bija*, or seed, mantra, a tone specific to the Absolute. The "m" clears the channels to enlightenment—the nadis—for increased consciousness. Bija mantras are also associated with the chakras. A comprehensive note is assigned to each chakra; each of the petals within the lotus of a chakra also makes its own sound. (In illustrations of the petals, you will find the "m" sound represented as a small dot atop each Sanskrit letter.)

Because of its association with the Absolute, the alphabet is called *devanagari*, or the "cities of the gods." Every letter refers to a particular god that manifests as that sound, which is why every one of the chakras is associated with a god or set of gods, as you will see in Part 2.

Besides creating seed sounds, Sanskrit also forms the basis of mantras—word formulas made by combining sound vibrations. When chanted or meditated upon, a mantra invites a change in

the natural realm. One of the reasons Sanskrit is the perfect language for spirituality is that it was composed with the belief that language creates the concepts within which we live and express ourselves.[11] Table 1 depicts important characteristics of the Sanskrit language.

Vowels

a	अ	ā	आ
i	इ	ī	ई
u	उ	ū	ऊ
ṛ	ऋट	ṝ	ॠ
ḷ	ऌ	e	ए
ai	ऐ	o	ओ
au	औ		

This is the Sanskrit word for chakra, or "cakra," in its meaning as a mystical circle or diagram:

चक्र

Sounds

ḥ	visarga (a soft-palate "s" sound)
ṁ	anusvāra (marks where the letter m changes pronunciation)

Consonants

Gutterals:	क *ka*	ख *kha*	ग *ga*	घ *gha*	ङ *ṅa*
Palatals:	च *ca*	छ *cha*	ज *ja*	झ *jha*	ञ *ña*
Cerebrals:	ट *ṭa*	ठ *ṭha*	ड *ḍa*	ढ *ḍha*	ण *ṇa*
Dentals:	त *ta*	थ *tha*	द *da*	ध *dha*	न *na*
Labials:	प *pa*	फ *pha*	ब *ba*	भ *bha*	म *ma*
Semivowels:	य *ya*	र *ra*	ल *la*	व *va*	
Sibilants:	श *śa*	ष *ṣa*	स *sa*		
Aspirate:	ह *ha*		*s = ' (avagraha)—the apostrophe*		

TABLE 1—THE SANSKRIT SOUNDS: This shows most of the fifty Sanskrit characters. The letters are arranged so that the simplest vowel sounds come first, then the dipthongs, then consonents, all according to the way they are pronounced in the mouth. Each corresponds to a particular aspect of the Absolute. See http://www.bhakti-yoga-meditation.com/sanskrit.html.

There is a reason we can't hear our chakras humming away. The truth is that we can't hear most of the sounds that radiate inside and around us. Sounds are mechanical waves, and we'll further explore them later as a way to better explain the fact that chakras are composed of sound, not only light.

So far we've been explaining the science of chakras through the lens of classical physics, which explains that energy is the force that makes things happen. This limited definition brings us to the doorstep of the chakras but doesn't invite us into the room. For that, we have to pass through the gate of quantum physics: the study of the subatomic ingredients that compose the universe. Quantum physics explains the "weirdness" of the chakras—their ability to transcend time and space, alert us to psychic information, and evolve us spiritually.

Quantum physics also explains why subtle energy structures such as the chakras connect us to one another across distances. According to quantum theory, a particle can sense the activity of another particle that may be close to it or millions of light-years away.[12] The nature of this interconnectivity has led quantum physicists to call all of reality "nonlocal," or unbound within time and space, rather than "local," or only located in one place.

The ultimate implication of nonlocality is that everyone and everything is inseparable; we exist within an ocean of oneness. There is no distinction between communicator and recipient. We play a dualistic role of observing our own actions and participating in them. And a vortex—one of the definitions of a chakra—has a nonlocal origin and expression, even though it can be, at one level, located in time and space.[13] Because of nonlocality, a chakra can be here and everywhere at the same time.

Nonlocality also explains why some chakra systems present dozens if not hundreds of chakras.[14] From a nonlocal point of view, we are unlimited, even though we are tasked with learning how to live within a limiting world. And within this sea of everything, chakras keep our feet on the ground—and our heads in the stars, as they have for thousands of years.

A Thumbnail History of the Chakras

As we learned earlier, *chakra* comes from an ancient East Indian language known as Sanskrit. It is a word and a concept that is thousands of years old, described first in the Vedic texts, ancient Hindu tracts of knowledge said to have originated between 1500 and 500 BCE, if not earlier. Codified over the centuries, the word *chakra* means "spinning wheel" or "disk" in Sanskrit.

Most likely, the word was first used by the Indo-European invaders of India known as Aryans. The Aryans were said to have entered India on chariots; hence the original meaning of the word chakra—first written as *cakra* yet pronounced with a "ch" sound—is "wheel" or "turning."

Picture the spinning chariot wheels of the Aryans as powerful disks glistening in the sun. The word chakra serves as an analogy to the sun itself, which travels around the world like the gleaming chariot of a king. It is also embedded in the word *kalacakra*, which means "wheel of time." Within the symbolism of these words are concepts—such as celestial order, movement, and balance—and descriptions of a vital part of our own being that marries the earthbound part of us to the invisible matter of the universe.

Tantra and yoga are two other terms often associated with India and chakra knowledge. Exploring them is essential to a solid understanding of chakra medicine, and you will read much more about them later in this book. Long ago, tantra was a shamanic tradition—actually a meld of various Indian, Asian, and often even Buddhist influences. While many Vedic philosophies, such as knowledge of the chakras, were folded into Hinduism, a panoply of ideas were integrated in tantra, including an understanding of the chakras. Practices emphasizing the Vedic traditions usually encourage tapping into chakra powers to release the soul from the body. Tantric practices employ the chakras to embrace the soul within the body. And yoga, an outgrowth of the Vedas, utilizes chakras in its body-based approaches to health, longevity, and spiritual enlightenment.

Other cultures have ascribed different names to the same whirling vortexes. They are *sephiroth* in the Jewish Kabbalah and *pukios* in the Incan tradition. They appear as the nine home worlds in Teutonic legend and are intricate constructs in Taoism, Bonism, Sufism, Buddhism, and many North and South

American tribal philosophies. They are even found in a few Christian sects as well as in Tibet, Egypt, and China.[15]

According to many experts, as we have seen, there are seven main in-body chakras (although several recognize that there are also chakras in the palms of our hands, soles of our feet, and far above our heads). This might be a popular thought, but it's not completely borne out with historical evidence. The Westernized belief in seven chakras is attributed to Sir John Woodroffe's interpretation of the East Indian or Hindu version of the chakra system. Using the pen name Arthur Avalon, during the early 1900s Woodroffe proposed seven main chakras in his book *The Serpent Power*.[16] However, as you'll discover, even Hindu and other tantric systems might recognize anywhere between three and a dozen chakras. It appears that Woodroffe's theory had sticking power, but isn't the only "right" one. As scholar David Gordon White points out in his book *Kiss of the Yogini*, "there is no 'standard' system of the cakras. Every school, sometimes every teacher within each school, has had their own cakra system."[17]

As you continue through this book, you'll explore several alternative chakra systems. You can work with one, several, all, or none of them; you might even arrive at your own. What's important to remember is that no matter what system you use, respond to, or ultimately design based on your own intuitive experience of working with chakras, each and every chakra contributes the same vital functions to our body, mind, and soul. Each is responsible for a variety of activities that allow us to be simultaneously human and divine. Each has historical relevance but must be customized to you, by you.

What do all subtle systems have in common but a reliance on subtle energy? It is a concept that has been touted worldwide and explored in particular detail in the Hindu world.

Subtle Energy Across Time

Subtle energy has been described in nearly every culture through time. It is called *chi* in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and *ki* in Japan. It is

named *prana* in many East Indian spiritualities, *reiki* in the Usui healing system, *olodumare* in Yoruba medicine, *vital force* in homeopathy, and *mana* among Hawaiian kahuna healers.

In the 1930s a subtle energy researcher named Wilhelm Reich assigned it the name *orgone*, which he perceived as a sort of living ether. This substance is similar to the Odic force Baron von Reichenbach discovered in the mid-1850s, a vitalist substance that permeates all living beings, including plants, humans, and animals. It is also similar to the *élan vital* described by Henri Bergson, a French philosopher who linked it with evolution and the development of consciousness. Chiropractors call it innate intelligence, and naturopaths use the term *vis medicatrix naturae*. It is labeled *kundalini* in Hinduism, seen as a concentrated field of cosmic energy that propels life and encourages enlightenment.

Returning to Reich, I think he offered perhaps one of the best ways to explain this vital energy. He asserted that deficits and constrictions of the body's orgone energy were the root cause of many diseases and life imbalances, while more robust orgone was at the root of good health and well-being. He saw this massless but ever-present substance as the fundamental creative force of nature, one that coalesces to form matter on all levels, small and grand.[18]

Most Eastern healing systems, and many developing Western ones, employ the use of subtle energies to effect physical change. Eastern processes include TCM, Japanese shiatsu, East Indian ayurveda, Hawaiian kahuna, reflexology, qigong, t'ai chi, and more. Western-based practices that encourage healing by shifting subtle energies include homeopathy, many forms of chiropractic care, massage, and programs including Healing Touch Program, Therapeutic Touch, and the Energetic Freedom Technique.

Dr. Beverly Rubik, a respected energy medicine expert, explains how subtle energy produces physical change. She highlights the existence of energetic fields (measurable and not) that emanate from the living as well as nonlocal or quantum connections, which allow consciousness or intention to alter reality. Inserted into her explanation is the term *biofield*, which is a word

you'll see frequently if you decide to delve into the science of chakras. The biofield is a complex electromagnetic field within and around the body. Some of it is measurable. For instance, conventional medical doctors use the electrocardiogram (ECG) to measure the functionality of the heart. They also employ the electroencephalogram (EEG) to assess the brain. A device called the SQUID (super-conducting quantum interference device) can measure magnetic activity, scanning for issues such as brain problems. Much of the biofield is immeasurable, however, as it is composed of subtle energy.

Subtle energy experts see this field, which they study through a discipline called bioenergetics, as a holistic living force that goes beyond the common reductionist model. As holistic nursing researcher Martha Rogers defines it, this field is a "unifying concept and energy that signifies the dynamic nature of the field" and comprises fields that are "infinite and paradimensional; they are in continuous motion."[19] As you'll discover in your explorations later in the book, this overarching field and the dozens within it greatly extend our reach as human beings, mainly through our subtle anatomy.

According to Rubik, subtle energy practitioners create change in the biofield. By altering the biofield, these healers shift the energetic anatomy, including the chakras, and restore health in the biofield, which in turn can heal the body.[20]

Basic Energies in the Hindu Universe

The ancient Hindus had their own subtle energy system, based on the existence of prana. Two of the most important types of energy related to the cosmos, life, and the chakras will appear over and over again in this book, so although this information is esoteric, I think it is important to introduce you to these two energy forms early in the book. These are the Hindu elements and the vital breaths.

In Hindu cosmology, everything in the universe is composed of five major elements, called *panchabhuta* or *bhuttas*. Each chakra holds and manages one of the elements, which are also called *tattvas,* or "truths." The other word for the tattvas you will find is "qualities." All of these terms name the same five

major elements. The tattvas are associated with deities, and, as you shall discover, every chakra is linked with one or more deities that depict that chakra's functions. Following is a brief description of the five elements and their qualities.

Earth (*prithvi* or *prithivi*): Earth is the heaviest of the Hindu elements. It is the pre-dominant quality forming the body and is solid and dense. There are two types of earth energy: *nitya* is eternal and is found within the atom; *anitya* is perishable and is expressed through work. Our body is perishable, but the part of us made of our atoms—our spirit—is eternal. Its force is solid, flowing as a midway point and leading toward permanence. Earth energy is located at the feet and has a sweet taste.

Water (*jal* or *apas*): Water bestows coolness, fluidity, and smoothness; it also transfers happiness. Water is eternal in its atomic structure and perishable when in a river, pond, or sea. The force of water is contracting, flows downward, and leads to calm. Water energy is related to the knees and is astringent in taste.

Air (*vayu*): Air is light yet tangible, linked with action and movement. There is air that is true and eternal, but the air we breathe is perishable. There are forty-nine different types of *maruts,* or winds, mentioned in the sacred text called the *Purana*. The force is motion, and it travels at acute angles. Vayu energy is found in the navel and tastes acidic.

Fire (*agni* or *tejas*): Fire is related to the passions, heat, beauty, goodness, and valor. The character of fire is to generate heat. Agni is one of the eight guardians protecting our universe. As with the other elements, there is an eternal fire, but there are also several types of perishable fires, including fires of the earth, sky, and stomach. The latter relates to hunger and digestion. There is also the fire we use to warm ourselves. This force is expansive, flows upward, and tends toward endings or death. Fire energy is located at the shoulders and tastes pungent.

Ether (*panchabhuta*): Ether is the carrier of sound, human made or otherwise. It is always eternal and is the essence that can't be quantified; rather, it is pervasive and is the nature of Brahman, or God.[21] Its force can do what all the other elements can accomplish without location, taste, or any other physical association.[22]

These five elements have countless corollaries in life. There are five elements in our body, for example: earth relates to our bones, flesh, and skin; water to our semen, blood, and urine; fire to heat, hunger, and thirst; air to breath, running, and walking; and ether (space) to love, modesty, and fear. The five elements appear in our breath, taste, color, shapes, and more. The chakras are composed of these elements—and most of them regulate the flow of specific elements in our lives.[23]

Yet another essential chakra concept is that of the vital breaths, moving energies that appear in our body as well as in the chakras. Each chakra is related to a vital breath. Guru Gorakshanath, an important Hindu yogi, wrote what I believe is the most complete commentary on the ten vital breaths, which are all aspects of our physical self and of divinity. At the end of the description of these breaths, I invite you to participate in a breathing exercise that you might imagine being conducted by Gorakshanath himself.

Prana: Air of breathing. Always lies in the heart and is also found in the mouth, nose, navel, *kanda* (an energetic organ located between the anus and the root of the reproductive organ), and great toe. It is the most important air of all, and controlling it through pranayama, or breathing exercises, is critical in yoga. In the Vedic texts the Upanishads, it is the single principle that derives its existence from the self. The Upanishads are commentaries, or later sections, of the Vedic texts that explain the main body of the Vedas.

Apana: Air of the rectum that moves through the lower part of the trunk. It helps us release our excrement and urine and is found in the rectum, male organ, thighs, knees, lower abdomen, waist, and navel.

Samana: Air of digestion. Found in the navel, this intestinal fire also resides in the limbs.

Udana: Air in the throat that serves speech. It is also active in the hands and feet and causes enlargement of the body.

Vyana: Air that circulates through the body and operates in the ears, lips, throat, nose, mouth, cheeks, and navel.

The other airs are as follows:

Naga: Air of erection

Kurma: Air of blinking

Krkara: Air of sneezing

Devadatta: Air of yawning

Dhananjaya: Air pervading the entire body that lasts beyond death

To the yogi, the navel is the center of the body. Apana is drawn up to the navel by prana, which is above the navel, and is there united with prana. Alternately, prana and apana draw each other through the body, uniting the lower and higher parts of our material self.

EXERCISE: **The Two Vital Airs**

Do you want to experience these two vital airs? Imagine Guru Gorakshanath telling you how to conduct this simple exercise, helping you expel and inhale your *jiva*, or soul.

Pronounce *ha* on the exhale to help your apana expel prana and, therefore, your soul.

Pronounce *sa* on the inhale so your prana drives down apana and helps you inhale your soul.

Now combine these sounds to pronounce *hamsa*, known as the *ajapa gayatri*, or a mantra that encourages immense power.

Try this for a few moments and see what happens for you. A yogi repeats these phrases continually—21,600 times—to create the most powerful effect.[24]

A Snapshot of the Chakras

Would you like to see a snapshot of the chakras? The following information gives you a picture at a glance of the qualities and properties of the seven main Hindu chakras. Covered here are the most accepted chakric associations in terms of location, endocrine gland, color, Hindu syllable or sound, physical functions (including related element and the Hindu associations with the body), psychological functions, and spiritual functions. As I mentioned earlier, however, numerous other associations with the seven Hindu chakras have developed over time, and you will find a more detailed list of these in Part 2, which devotes a full chapter to each chakra.

First Chakra: Muladhara

Location: Hips

Endocrine Gland: Adrenals

Color: Red

Hindu Sound: Lam

Physical Functions: Earth element. Physical issues related to hip area, elimination, and part of genital system; coccygeal vertebrae, life energy; also associations with smell and nose in Hindu system.

Psychological Functions: Safety and security; worthiness to exist; primal issues and feelings

Spiritual Functions: Self-identity, physically oriented intuitive abilities such as psychometry and sensing others' bodily sensations

Second Chakra: Svadhisthana

Location: Abdomen

Endocrine Gland: Ovaries or testes

Color: Orange

Hindu Sound: Vam

Physical Functions: Water element. Physically governs sexual organs, upper intestines, abdominal area; sacral plexus; also Hindu associations with taste and tongue.

Psychological Functions: Governs emotional health and creativity

Spiritual Functions: Relationship with emotions and intuitive senses based on feelings, such as the empathic gifts

Third Chakra: Manipura

Location: Solar plexus

Endocrine Gland: Pancreas

Color: Yellow

Hindu Sound: Ram

Physical Functions: Fire element. Physically associated with digestive system, skin, diaphragm, and small intestines; the solar or gastric plexus; and Hindu associations with sight and the eyes.

Psychological Functions: Personal power, mental activity, self-esteem, and willpower

Spiritual Functions: Intuitive powers related to knowledge and mental activity, as well as control of physiology

Fourth Chakra: Anahata

Location: Heart

Endocrine Gland: Heart

Color: Green

Hindu Sound: Yam

Physical Functions: Air element. Physically monitors the heart, circulatory system, blood, lungs, breasts, thymus, shoulders, and related body parts; cardiac plexus; and Hindu associations with touch and the skin.

Psychological Functions: Love, relationships, ability to relate and bond with others and the Divine

Spiritual Functions: Ability to attain highest forms of love and service toward others; intuitive gifts related to control of air, such as levitation, as well as acceptance of limitless knowledge and healing powers

Fifth Chakra: Vishuddha

Location: Throat

Endocrine Gland: Thyroid

Color: Blue

Hindu Sound: Ham

Physical Functions: Akasha or ether element. Physically manages neck, ears, jaws, teeth, trachea, vocal cords, and other organs and glands in neck area; laryngeal and carotid plexuses; Hindu links to hearing and ears.

Psychological Functions: Communication and expression; issues of faith, decision making, sharing of one's own truth

Spiritual Functions: Decision to face karma or not, learning how to free the self from the world; intuitive gifts related to speaking and hearing as well as knowledge about past, present, and future

Sixth Chakra: Ajña

Location: Forehead

Endocrine Gland: Pituitary

Color: Purple

Hindu Sound: Om

Physical Functions: Element of light. Physically manages the brain, eyes, neurological system, sinuses, and other body parts in forehead area; medulla plexus; no specific Hindu sense associations.

Psychological Functions: Self-perception and self-awareness; vision and perception; also highly related to the mind and our higher perceptions of reality, as well as ability to break old patterns

Spiritual Functions: Transformation of individual consciousness to transcendence; intuitive gifts include those related to psychic sight, higher vision, and higher mind functions, as well as dozens of others

Seventh Chakra: Sahasrara

Location: Top of the head

Endocrine Gland: Pineal

Color: White

Hindu Sound: Visarga (a breathing sound)

Physical Functions: Not linked with an element. Physically runs the skull, brain, cranium, and central nervous system; cranial plexus; is also considered beyond the physical senses and body in Hindu system.

Psychological Functions: Emotional and mental relationships with higher virtues, such as hope and truth; assists with releasing misperceptions, learning issues, psychosis, and other challenges

Spiritual Functions: Acceptance of our divinity and defeat of egotism; intuitive abilities enfold to enable one to become a "wise one"

As we examine each of these factors, remember that although your chakras operate a step outside of physical reality, they are just as real as is anything you can perceive with your physical senses. They are as real as you. Many people with strong intuitive abilities can sense their presence and behavior using subtle perception; maybe you are one of them. If you're not, perhaps you will develop these abilities as you read more about chakras and try out some of the chakra medicine exercises in this book.

Throughout this chapter, your first step into the amazing world of chakras, subtle and other extraordinary energies, and the chakras' partner structures, you've already learned that a body of science explains the existence and

performance of these transformational energy organs. Their ability to convert physical energy to subtle energy and vice versa is based on quantum physics, which is often considered a strange and spooky branch of science. But this doesn't mean that chakras are only otherworldly. Rather, as you have seen, chakras manage physical and psychological functions, operating through their placement in the spine and head while also contributing to our spiritual gifts and goals. Their unique structure, which creates spin, indicates that they truly are a sort of "magic motor" that empowers all of our existence.

We aren't the first to tread this path. As we've explored, the term *chakra* stems from ancient Hindu knowledge referring to the wheels on a chariot. Over the centuries, the word has come to reference spinning wheels of light that are integral to human—and other—bodies. As our perception of these organs and their partners—the meridians, nadis, and energy fields, among others—has expanded, so has "chakraology," the study of these spinning wheels. This is why, now that we have arrived in the twenty-first century, we know that chakras are associated with bodily locations, spinal nerve plexuses, anchoring endocrine glands, colors, sounds, elements, physical functions, psychological functions, spiritual functions, and, as you'll come to discover, so much more.

One of these "so much mores" is kundalini, the energy that sparks the awakening and expansion of the chakras, turning them on at every level. Kundalini is the subject of our next chapter, where you will enter yet another world of great power and mystery.

[contents]

What Is Kundalini?

VENOM CAN ALSO be healing.

NICOLAS CAGE

The serpent yawns and stretches. It is mud red, this once-coiled snake, the color of the dust from which our bodies are made. As it undulates—as its sinewy body climbs from the earth toward the stars—its color shifts in hue and intensity until, finally, it looks just like a star, glowing white and shimmering.

This is kundalini, a body-based subtle energy that activates the chakras and enables spiritual maturation. A life force mythologized in the Hindu religion (and other spiritualities by other names), kundalini is commonly called the red serpent or the rainbow serpent. Along with its kin the nadis, granthi, and koshas, kundalini fuels our chakras, ensures good health, and ultimately holds the key to spiritual enlightenment. Because of the important role that kundalini and its associative "cousins" play, we're going into some depth in this chapter. This information is also necessary in order to understand some of the information in part 2 that outlines the complexities of the seven in-body Hindu chakras.

As preparation for understanding kundalini, it is helpful to understand its Sanskrit foundation. In Sanskrit, *kundalini* means "life energy." This natural divine energy is the key to becoming a living and enlightened sage.

Etymologically, the word is a composition of several separate parts. Here are definitions of various subroots of the word:

kundal—coiled, spiraled

kun—earth

di—"little pot of earth" or "single cell"; can also be related to its alternative root *da*

da—to give, "the bestower"

lini—perpetual consciousness, the merging of the beginning and the end

Sanskrit words are either feminine or masculine. The term *kundalini* is feminine in nature. Hence, when we put it all together, she is the "feminine coiled energy that begins in a little pot of earth, and when blessed by the Bestower awakens us to perpetual consciousness."[1]

As you are introduced to kundalini energy, know that it is a worldwide phenomenon. As we'll explore at a deeper level in part 4, it has been known in disparate cultures and by many names through time. For example, Quetzalcoatl, the "plumed serpent," was worshipped across Central and South America for two thousand years. This name holds a threefold meaning: the cosmic energy that gives life to everything in the universe, a form of inner energy comparable to kundalini, and the title of one who has developed their kundalini energy.[2] It was often depicted as shown in Illustration 3 and is also represented by a snake swallowing its own tale—an ouroboros, also shown in Illustration 3. This ancient symbol, first seen in Egypt in the fourteenth century BCE, represents our ability to continually re-create ourselves. It also relates to the idea of primordial unity with an originating force and has frequently been compared to the serpent that activates our life energy, inviting a rebirth.

The most fundamental knowledge of kundalini, however, is thoroughly and beautifully portrayed in Hindu literature as a red or rainbow-colored serpent or snake.

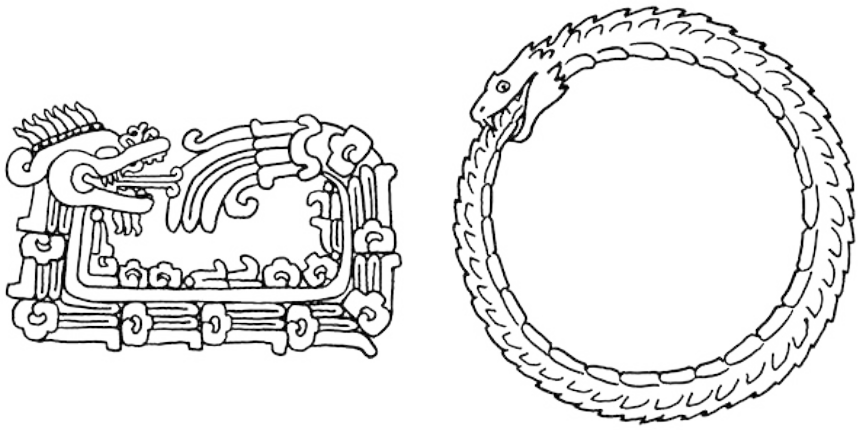


ILLUSTRATION 3—THE PLUMED SERPENT AND AN OUROBOROS: The plumed serpent (left) is a Central American depiction of the Hindu kundalini. In ancient Egypt, as well as other civilizations, the kundalini is seen as an ouroborus, or a snake swallowing its own tail (right). ILLUSTRATION BY ELISABETH ALBA

The Rainbow Serpent: Climbing the Chakra Ladder

What is this rainbow serpent the Hindus know as kundalini? When represented symbolically, kundalini is often portrayed as a serpent lying coiled at the base of our first chakra, called muladhara in Sanskrit. It is red in color and seen as feminine. Wrapped around our coccyx, this life energy is dormant until summoned, at which point it awakens and begins undulating upward.

The path of this life energy is sinewy as it flows through the nadis, the energy channels that deliver subtle energy to the chakras. As kundalini travels these pathways, it activates each of the seven in-body chakras. The goal of this potent feminine force is to reach the seventh chakra, which is located at the crown of the head and carries a male energy.

The merging of the feminine kundalini and her male consort atop the head enables full access to Spirit and invites enlightenment, called *samadhi* in Sanskrit. This unification of feminine and masculine enables a marriage between our own feminine and masculine selves, as well as our human and divine qualities. We are now empowered to be our true selves, servants to higher principles in everyday life.

In Hindu scripture, celestial beings are associated with kundalini flow. Kundalini itself is an aspect of the goddess Shakti, who is composed of fire. Her consort, the male god Shiva, awaits her in the seventh chakra. As the creative energy that forms mind and matter, kundalini is unfulfilled without her divine mate, Shiva.

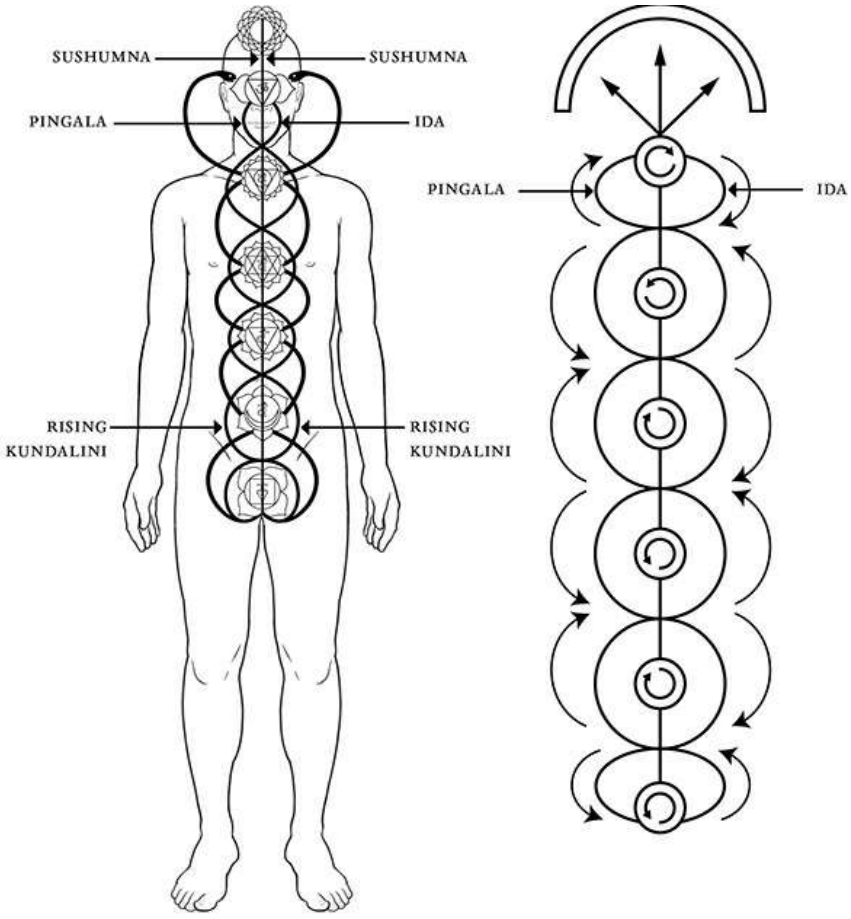


ILLUSTRATION 4—KUNDALINI AND THE THREE MAIN NADIS (LEFT) AND THE ENERGY FLOW OF IDA AND PINGALA (RIGHT): There are dozens if not thousands of nadis, or energy channels, that link the chakras and support the rising of kundalini. The three main nadis are presented here. As you can see, the chakras spin because of the polar or crisscrossing energies of the ida and pingala. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC (LEFT) AND LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT (RIGHT)

In Hindu chakra lore, there are several energetic bodies associated with this awakening process. Chief are the nadis, which are somewhat comparable to the meridians of Asian medical systems. There are striking differences,

however. Fourteen main meridians or channels deliver chi—Traditional Chinese Medicine's term for life energy—throughout the body. Depending on the source text, Hindu scripture counts anywhere from 1,000 to 3,500 nadis. If you ask members of the Tibetan and ayurvedic traditions, the latter being an East Indian healing modality and philosophy, you'd be told such numbers are far too low: there are 72,000 nadis.[3] Some researchers believe that meridians interact with the duct system, the bodily tubes that carry glandular secretions, and nadis are associated with the physical nervous system. Under this scenario, the meridians and nadis fulfill different jobs.[4] Whatever the similarities and differences, ancient wisdom sees the nadis as the riverways that transport kundalini throughout the body.

Three main nadis are especially vital to the rising kundalini and are shown in Illustration 4. The first is the sushumna, the central energy channel that flows up the center of the spine through the chakras and serves as the main road for the rising kundalini. The kundalini also splits itself in two and flows through two additional conduits, the ida and pingala. The ida, which originates below the first chakra and ends at the left nostril, is considered a feminine channel, and its energy is receptive, loving, and intuitive. The pingala starts below the first chakra and ends at the right nostril. It is masculine in nature: demonstrative, dominating, and active. These crisscrossing energies ensure a blend of our own feminine and masculine qualities and activate the same within our chakras, which have similar attributes. For instance, the first chakra, which manages our safety and security issues, helps us assert ourselves professionally and also receive financial rewards for our efforts.

As it rises, kundalini must pass through special energetic locks, called *granthis* in Sanskrit. The vigilant granthis remind us of the story of the Sphinx, the Egyptian stone figure with a lion's body and a human head: if we want to pass by the Sphinx, we must answer the riddle it poses to us. The granthis, then, are gatekeepers that challenge the kundalini's rising.

In Greek mythology, to fail this test is to be eaten. Fortunately, this isn't the fate of kundalini pilgrims. Still, to allow kundalini to continue on its way, we

must struggle through and tame the issues of the chakras that these granthis guard.

These energetic locks guard the first, fourth, and sixth chakras, located in the hip, heart, and forehead areas (see Illustration 5). Respectively, they ask us to examine our security, love, and self-image issues. But the truth is that kundalini's upward climb forces the contemplation and healing of all our issues, one chakra at a time, because one of the higher reasons for a kundalini activation is to clear our chakras—and therefore our physical, psychological, and spiritual issues—so we can live as the self we truly are. As you might imagine, while there are benefits to this transformative process, there are challenges as well.

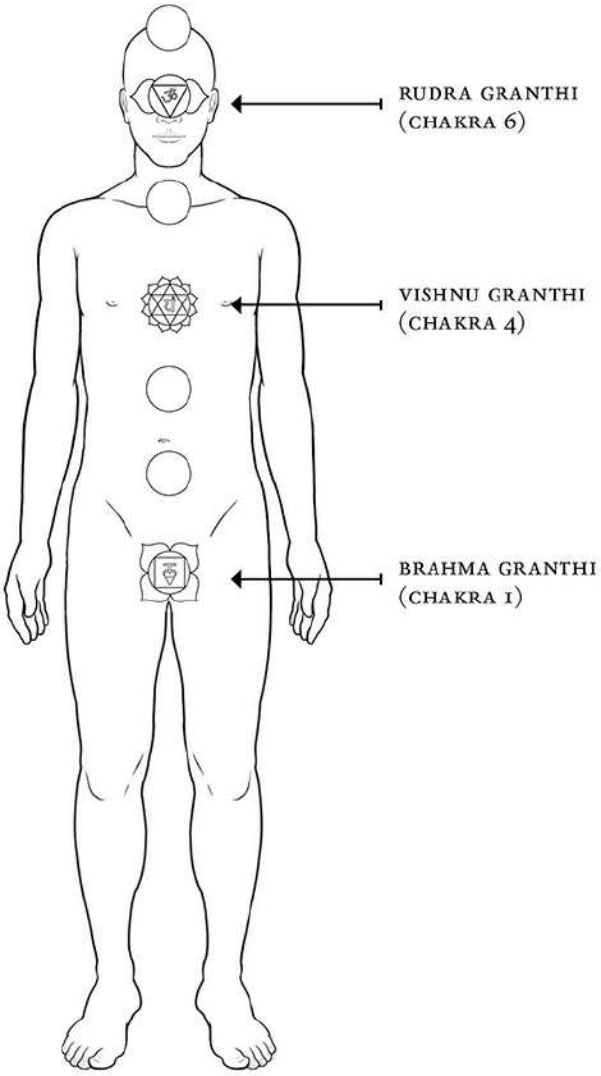


ILLUSTRATION 5—THE THREE MAIN GRANTHIS: Also called knots or locks, the three main granthis present challenges to kundalini's upward climb. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

The three locks, shown in Illustration 5 and labeled with their Hindu names and chakra "home base," are as follows:

LOCK/GRANTHI	CHAKRA	TYPICAL CHAKRA BLOCKS	LESSON
Brahma	First	Childhood abuse issues; financial challenges; addictions; repressed sexuality and identity confusion; questions about primary partner, lifestyle, and career; potentially fatal illnesses; greed, envy, and materialism	Release ourselves from the trappings of the material world and establish the self in totality
Vishnu	Fourth	Questions about lovability, deservedness, relationship needs, codependency, separateness from the Divine; heart, lung, and breast conditions	Perceive the existence of the universal life principle
Rudra	Sixth	Issues with appearance, self-worth, and body image; questions about future, goals, and dreams; challenges with vision, perception, learning, and hormones[5]	Release duality and realize oneness with joy

The Sheaths of Enlightenment

It's not enough to experience a kundalini rising or even the divine inspiration that often accompanies the marriage of our feminine and masculine selves; we must also direct our energy toward higher ends. After all, all energy can be used toward good, bad, or indifferent ends. By passing through the *koshas* as our kundalini awakens our subtle energy system, we receive the training necessary to develop into mature human beings.

Koshas are like veils, but they could also be described as maps that encourage us to hone and direct our energies toward loving ends, helping us navigate the inner journey of maturation. They are described in the three-thousand-year-old Vedic spiritual tract called the Upanishads (further

discussed in chapter 17) as five veils that separate us from our true and divine selves. We must pass through these sheaths to merge again with the light that is our source.

The koshas are actually interwoven layers that work like lesson plans; see Illustration 6. Here are the five layers and their teachings:

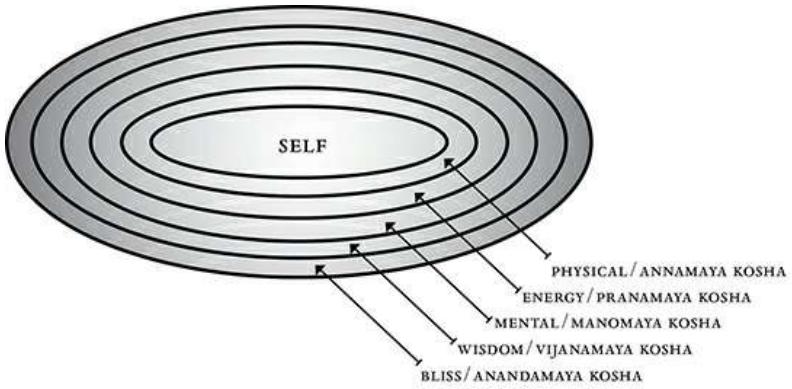


ILLUSTRATION 6—THE FIVE KOSHAS: The five koshas (sheaths) that separate us from the true reality. Each holds lesson plans that enable our spiritual maturation.
ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Annamaya Kosha: Contains the teachings of and wisdom gained from having a physical body. By respectfully caring for and tending our physical body, belongings, and needs, as well as honoring the same in others, we achieve the state of physical balance necessary to move toward spiritual growth.

Pranamaya Kosha: This is the energy, breath, or life-force body. This body and the next three are part of the subtle body and are therefore unseen. We embrace this body by deepening our breath and attuning it with our physical body.

Manomaya Kosha: The mental body, this kosha relates to our nervous system and expresses as thoughts or awareness. To calm and soothe this body is to adjoin our body and mind, with our breath serving as the bridge between the two. Achieving peace between these first three bodies is a vital way to achieve peace in our everyday lives.

Vijanamaya Kosha: Known as the wisdom body, this subtle body reflects our consciousness and our ability to illuminate truths about others, the world, and ourselves. This body comes alive once our first three koshas are unified and our own spiritual power begins to emerge.

Anandamaya Kosha: Called the bliss body, we know this body is awakened when we stop observing ourselves and simply experience the beauty and light of every moment. We feel whole. We are integrated. We "are."[6]

So far, the most important point made about kundalini, in addition to what it is, relates to the fact that it rises through the nadis to stir the chakras, forming the basis for enlightenment. This process, further described in chapters 20–22 in relation to the process and the science involved, has its ups and downs. Ultimately, however, the story of kundalini is a love story: the legend of Shiva and Shakti, a tale of all aspects of life that are male and female. This includes our own inner male and inner female, which unite to form our greater self.

The Love Story of the Chakras: Shiva and Shakti

She rises to meet him, for he has been awaiting her. In their hearts, both know that they have never been separated; they are an undifferentiated unity. They are one. They are Shiva and Shakti, the divine masculine and the divine feminine, the main actors in tantric philosophy.

The two lovers understand the true reason that the spirit bodies of the chakras are embodied within human beings like stepping-stones to the heavens. It is to enable them to reunite again and again.

The core teachings of most types of tantra are imbedded in the story of the Hindu gods Shiva and Shakti. When tantra emerged from early Hindu-Vedic thought, it embraced these two orthodox gods in particular. Their reunion as lovers is the perfect allegory for the rise of kundalini, rich with symbolism.

In tantric philosophy, these two gods are giants. Shiva is nothing less than consciousness itself. His consort, Shakti, is all of manifested reality. Shakti is

power, the spark that animates the world. She is also the representation of Shiva in the concrete world. Theirs is a love affair of legend and an illumination of our own path of self-development.

According to tantric legend, Shakti and Shiva are conjoined in *tat*, the Sanskrit term for "that," eternal and unchangeable consciousness. Everything we perceive in physical reality comes from the *bindu*, or "point." When this point is unmanifested, it is called *maha bindu* or *para bindu*. It is the natural home of the unified Shakti and Shiva; because of this, all of creation flows from bindu.

When we look around the world, everything we see is Shakti as she pours through bindu. What she manifests, however, is always an expression of Shiva, or consciousness. When Shakti is at rest, there is no movement: nothing we can see, hear, or touch. This place of peace is called *sat-chit-ananda,* or being-consciousness-bliss.

In this space—when Shiva and Shakti are completely merged and still—there is no sound. This state is always present, and experiencing it is one of the goals of both tantra and yoga. But physical reality is not possible in this place of silence and tranquility. In order to create physical reality, Shiva and Shakti separated, and our human state reflects this separation. One way this is explained is that our Shiva selves remained behind in the divine realm, and our Shakti selves became form. Just as Shiva and Shakti desire to merge again into their unified state, so do we with our spiritual essence.

Kundalini activation is our means of reconnecting with our divine selves, represented by Shakti's rise to answer Shiva's call. Both lovers are active in this process. There is a downward movement (of our Shiva selves), called *maya*, a process in which our divine selves awaken our dormant power. The upward movement—kundalini rising through the chakras—is called enlightenment, or *prakasha*. One of the ways we encourage this union is through chanting *aum* (or *om*), the word of creation or primal vibration. This is the sound (*nada*) of Shakti manifesting Shiva's consciousness.

Many yogic and tantric practices are meant to help us remember the oneness of Shakti and Shiva and to understand that, ultimately, separation is an

illusion.

It will be easier to comprehend the effects and importance of kundalini if you have a basic understanding of this awakening and rising process, specifically why it's important and sometimes difficult.

The Benefits—and Challenges—of a Kundalini Awakening

The term *kundalini awakening* describes the activation of powerful kundalini energy and its advancement through the chakras. But this succinct definition does little to illustrate the experience of undergoing a kundalini awakening, which is often more like a caterpillar wrestling to leave the cocoon than the free flight of an emerged butterfly.

Inside the cocoon, every one of the caterpillar's cells reconfigures until imaginal cells emerge, those that are programmed to create a butterfly instead of a ground-crawling insect. The caterpillar's old cells, however, attack these imaginal cells, not recognizing their vibrations. Then, despite this, the imaginal cells multiply to such an extent that they engulf the old cells—and a butterfly is born.

The butterfly is one of the symbols of the state of samadhi, but few people will tell you what might occur as you journey toward the free flight of enlightenment. As the kundalini energy climbs, it will stimulate all of the unhealed issues lying within each of your chakras.

As I discussed earlier, the chakras hold the records of our physical, psychological, and spiritual issues. They can also hold others' energies because our auric fields are two-way streets: while serving as protective barriers, they also attract, react to, and absorb external subtle energies. Some of these internalized energies—which might be physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual in nature—complement our own energy, in which case they help sustain or support us. Others are discordant and cause challenges within our system. The kundalini energy wants to replace our old issues and programs,

and the harmful energies of others, with new "imaginal cells," or programs that mirror our essential or enlightened self.

The problem isn't the goal of a kundalini awakening. The discomfort lies in how we react to what kundalini energy reveals as it lights up our chakras.

As kundalini energy enters a chakra, every unresolved issue or emotion within it vibrates. The part of us that incurred this issue, or the part of us that reacted to an incoming energy, is also stimulated. We might now reexperience the original trauma, emotion, desire, or misperception.

The goals of this retriggering are to release what is blocking our path toward peace and to open to more fulfilling truths. We must change the information in the locked-in energy, its vibration, or both. We are to perform chakra medicine for the attainment of a more whole state within each chakra. This can be difficult. Perhaps an unconscious aspect of us doesn't want to let go of a situation or belief or another's energy. Maybe the people or beings outside us don't want us to effect such a shift. Further repression of old issues can cause anything from retraumatization to physical illness. If the kundalini energy can't push its way through a chakra or a granthi, it can remain stuck at that level until the path is clear.

The most challenging of kundalini reactions is called kundalini syndrome. This set of symptoms often creates a state of physical, psychological, or spiritual emergency, forcing us to seek assistance in order to clarify, release, and heal our old issues and accept what is true: that we are worthy, lovable, and deserving of the love represented by the kundalini merging with the divine light. Common symptoms of kundalini syndrome can include shaking and other physical movements, physical trauma and illness, panic attacks, psychological upheaval, uncomfortable or disturbing psychic phenomena, and our own fear-based reactions to these symptoms.[7] Some of these same symptoms can accompany a "normal" kundalini rising.

But is there really such a thing as a normal kundalini rising? Well, no and yes. No because every individual is different. Some people are born with their kundalini already activated; for others, kundalini expands naturally as they age or develop. Still other people experience a kundalini rising after a

trauma such as a car accident, the loss of a loved one, or a spiritual crisis. Some cultivate kundalini energy through years of spiritual devotion, perhaps by participating in yoga, meditation, or purification processes. Another method for activating kundalini is through a process called transmission, in which a spiritual master energetically activates the kundalini in a student.

The other differential in kundalini risings is that the process can be uneven. Some individuals might experience a first chakra awakening, which can be accompanied by flashes of heat, bodily shakes, security crises, sexual charges, or emotional drama, and remain stuck at that first chakra granthi for years. Others might experience a quick and easy partial kundalini rising, quickly working through any accompanying issues, only to linger a while at a higher chakra. Yet other people experience absolutely no negative side effects. It's as if one day a light is switched on and they feel like their kundalini has completely risen.

What does the completed journey feel like? Everyone experiences it differently, but there are certain common reactions. The traveler who has arrived is physically energized and able to direct their life energy toward important ends—and yet rest at night. The term *peacefully energized* would ironically describe the kundalini graduate.

If you reach this destination, the same would be true of your emotional state. Your feelings would be fluid, flowing like water, never stagnating or rushing too quickly. You would greet them all with a soft smile, for you would appreciate them for what they are: messages that provide insight. Your mind would be clear and clean and thus able to quickly respond to feelings, and because your feelings can now flow easily, your reactions to them would range from firm to easy, never too fierce or weak.

The kundalini alumnus enjoying a heartfelt connection to the Divine will feel a bond with all beings yet be psychologically intelligent enough to know when to establish boundaries and to what degree. Ultimately it is this link with the Divine that illuminates everything about the adept's life. From Spirit we come, to Spirit we will return, and in Spirit we live our lives. For most, their lives will continue as before, as indicated by the famous Zen saying

"chop wood, carry water." Before enlightenment, we chop wood and carry water. And after kundalini has lit up our entire field of stars, we chop wood and carry water.

For some, however, a kundalini awakening becomes a purely spiritual experience. In certain people, the chakra gifts evolve from their psychic state to reveal *siddhi*, the Hindu word for magical gifts. (We will discuss the various psychic, spiritual, and siddhi chakra gifts in chapter 3.) Other people experience enlightenment as a call to service or the desire for a new career. Yet others shine and glow with the aura of the guru or master. Because each of us is a unique spiritual essence, it is natural to expect the enlightened state to vary from person to person.

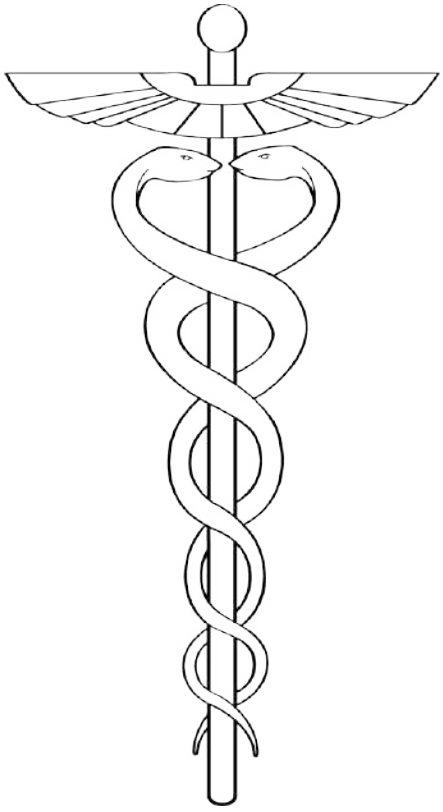


ILLUSTRATION 7—THE GREEK CADUCEUS AND KUNDALINI: The ancient Greek caduceus, also known as Hermes's staff, depicts the same symbols as the Hindu kundalini. This image reflects the medicinal qualities of the serpent kundalini. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

From an energetic point of view, however, all kundalini awakenings have more rather than fewer similarities because no matter how it rises, kundalini must rise. This is what every activation and uprising has in common. As I mentioned, the focus of kundalini is to clear the chakras so we can become the self we are meant to be. And one way or another, a true samadhi outcome involves breaking through the koshas, or sheaths of illusion that keep us stuck in pain and fear.

As you have learned, the serpent kundalini can be an object of fear. After all, we see a snake and we think "venom." But the snake is also the great healer, working in and through the chakras to spiral us toward the heavens. Illustration 7 shows the link between kundalini and a symbol of healing: the caduceus.

Kundalini's path may be slow and arduous or, for some, quick and easy. But always it passes from the lowest and most mundane of chakras, winding through several nadis or energy channels to activate the highest and most spiritual of chakras. To accomplish this goal, kundalini passes through three granthis, the energetic knots or locks that present spiritual "quizzes" we must pass before it will continue its climb and its cleansing of our imbalances and unhelpful patterns.

Other subtle structures bind kundalini and the chakras. These include the koshas, sheaths of energy that represent a set of enlightening ideas. By far, the benefits of a kundalini awakening outweigh its sometimes-fierce consequences, if only for the physical health, mental clarity, emotional maturity, and spiritual purity that results. We are made for kundalini—and kundalini is made for us.

Now that you understand the basics of the chakra world, including the role of kundalini, it's time to jump into the most well-known chakra system: the universe of Hindu chakras. To understand the core Hindu concepts is to step back in time, yet it will illuminate the nature of your very real and current self.

[contents]

The Hindu Chakra System

> This is a place where grandmothers hold babies on their laps under the stars and whisper in their ears that the lights in the sky are holes in the floor of heaven.
>
> Rick Bragg

A chakra is like a galaxy enveloped in a luminescent boundary that frames the energies, colors, patterns, and ideas within it, all of which spin and interact. A galaxy, of course, is so immense that it's hard to see it in its entirety, much less grasp its contents. To understand the universality of chakras, we will narrow our scope by developing insights into the heart of the chakra world: the Hindu constellation of chakras. Though there are many chakra systems and they are found in cultures everywhere, the seven in-body Hindu chakras reflect their commonality. If we investigate our own seven little galaxies in depth, they will tell us the story of all chakras.

In the discussion that follows, I will source the earliest Hindu scripture whenever possible. But even within this limited universe of seven primary chakras there are many interpretations, and not all agree. If there are strong dissimilarities, I will offer samples of these—for instance, the heart chakra being centered in the heart or the thymus gland; experts are divided, so I indicate both possibilities. I will follow a similar course with spellings, keeping to the most standard ones, but please know that over thousands of years these words have differentiated and evolved. Mainly, my emphasis will

be on the chakra systems I have found most consistent with ancient scripture and that are my favorites as a practitioner.

Early Hindu writings on chakras didn't have the bells and whistles we have today—relating auras, elements, planets, and sounds to specific chakras, for example. Yet over the centuries, these and other descriptors have become associated with the chakras. Therefore, rather than limiting this section to only the most ancient "classical" information, I will include what has become most accepted, what is most frequently associated, or what is considered primary. And I'll add information I believe is critical to understanding the nature of each chakra, such as the archetypes associated with each and the stage at which it develops.

Now, with all of these caveats in mind, it is time for us to explore.

[contents]

Hindu Chakras

THE BASIC SEVEN

> THERE IS NO greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.
>
> MAYA ANGELOU

The seven-chakra Hindu system is the cornerstone of contemporary chakra knowledge. In fact, this early presentation of chakra anatomy is the best known and most widely accepted in the world. While it isn't the only system, even within Hindu tradition, this core teaching symbolizes the universal story of the subtle self.

In comparison with other chakra systems, this one is arguably the most complete. Over time, thousands of metaphysicians, scholars, practitioners, and scientists have delved into its central principles and analyzed every nook and cranny of every chakra. What has emerged is a rich and complex structure showcasing themes that apply to every area of our lives—and to every life on this planet.

Within your own seven chakras lie all your memories, from the smiles and tears of childhood to the most notable—and even the most minute—experiences of adulthood. Emanating from your chakras are the patterns that determine the ways in which you interact with those around you as well as the hopes and dreams that steer your future. These interwoven bands of pulsing energies are "you," formulating your unique self but also bonding you with the rest of humanity—and everything else in the universe.

In this chapter, I will present various viewpoints from which we can examine each of the seven basic Hindu chakras. As you will soon learn, the array of perspectives we will cover is immense. Some are highly esoteric, requiring years of contemplation and study if we are to glean the real nuggets

of meaning; yantras, the symbolic depictions of the chakras, fall into this category, as do the vital breaths I introduced you to in part 1. Others are straightforward and familiar, like the sense organ that is associated with each chakra. Thus we have stories within stories, wheels within wheels, repeated from the first chakra to the seventh. The brief descriptions of each that I lay out in this chapter will serve as a foundation as you read the seven chapters that follow, one for each chakra in the Hindu constellation.

Three areas in particular will require an in-depth explanation: the developmental stages of the chakras; their psychological aspects (emotional, mental, and personality); and the innate psychic abilities and kundalini-cultivated siddhis associated with each. Sections on the elements and the *lokas*, or cosmic planes, as well as the emotional challenges related to chakra activation, will complete our preparation for in-depth analysis of each chakra.

What's in a Chakra?

To regulate every area of our life, chakras employ physical, subtle, and other types of energies that you will learn about in section 2. The Hindu system captures dozens of types of chakra energies, using the term *energy* very broadly to include the vibration of the Sanskrit name, the energy of the associated archetype, the physical gland it interacts with energetically, and more. Remember: energy is vibrating information. All of these categories can be thought of as vibrational data within the chakras. Those I feature in this chapter are only the most common of these, and you will see that even this list is extensive.

Note: With some exceptions, the descriptions of the components, as well as predominant sense, sense organ, action organ, and vital breath, are based on the equivalent information in my book *The Subtle Body: An Encyclopedia of Your Energetic Anatomy*.[1] I have noted the exceptions.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning: Every Hindu chakra is called by a Sanskrit name that holds a specific meaning.

Other Names: Several chakras have alternative Sanskrit names, which I will list and explain. Many of these names are tantric, Vedic, yogic, or puranic (derived from scriptures known as the Puranas).

Location: There are many ways to describe a chakra's location, including its relation to the spine; the *sthula sarira,* or associated nerve plexus; and nearby organs or other bodily structures.

Purpose: This is a general statement of the chakra's major activities.

Color: The color relates to the vibrational frequency a chakra emanates. Some chakras are described with nontraditional or secondary colors, which I will also include.

Chakra Activation: The general time period during a person's life when the chakra is activated.

Associated Gland: Every chakra is associated with an endocrine gland, and I will name and describe these. You will also find an image of this gland, showing its bodily location, and I will include scientific findings pertinent to the gland's functions. Illustration 8 shows the most common locations of the chakra's associated glands.

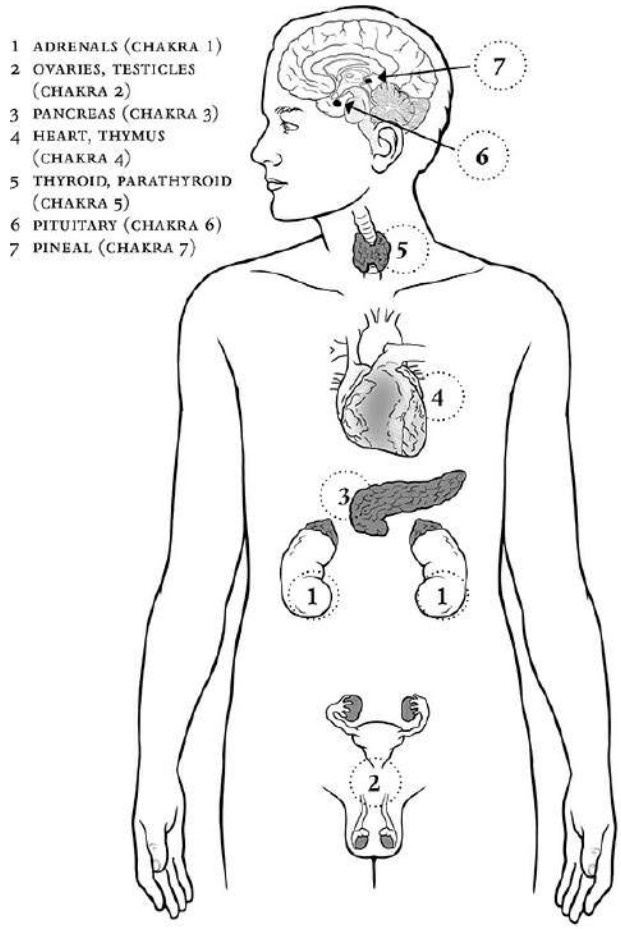


ILLUSTRATION 8—THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM: Shown here are many of the major endocrine glands associated with the chakras. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Body Parts Managed: The physical structures, organs, or functions that each chakra influences.

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ: The physical sense associated with the chakra, and the organ, or *jnanendriya,* governing the sense.

Action Organ: The organ, or *karmendriya,* that generates the principal physical activity of this chakra.

Vital Breath: The type of breath this chakra manages, if applicable.

Related Diseases: These are the afflictions most commonly associated with the chakra. I will not list cancers of areas appearing at chakra

locations, however, as they can be assumed; for instance, cancer of the throat relates to the throat chakra.

Psychological Functions: The chakra's emotional and mental functions.

Associated Archetypes: Universal "templates" associated with the chakra. Employing the definition of an archetype as a "pattern of behavior," I will apply Ambika Wauters's wisdom about chakras and archetypes found in her book *Chakras and Their Archetypes*.[2]

Personality Profile: The personality traits associated with the chakra.

Chakra Deficiencies: What occurs if the chakra is deficient in energy, especially psychologically and behaviorally.

Chakra Excesses: Symptoms of too much energy running through, to, or from the chakra, with emphasis on psychological symptoms.

Balanced Chakra: What this chakra offers us psychologically when it is balanced.

Symbols/Yantras: The symbol (yantra) associated with each chakra, including the lingam and yoni, if applicable. The lingam represents Shiva, or divine male energy, and the yoni represents Shakti, or female creative energy. A yantra is actually a collection of symbols within a geometric design that aids in meditation in the tantric tradition.

Component Parts: Each chakra is associated with an element, and related to each element are colors, sounds, and lotus petals. A review of the five *bhutas*, or physical elements, appears in the section "Basic Energies in the Hindu Universe" in chapter 1.

Gross Element: Called tattvas, these are the material elements associated with each chakra.

Subtle Element: The *tanmatra*, or essence of the sense perception associated with this chakra.

Color of the Element: The color of the gross element as described by tantric yoga. A chakra's color relates to the horizontal band of frequencies of the entire chakra, while the elemental color relates only

to the energy of the associated element. Rather than conflicting with it, the elemental color blends supportively into the greater chakra.

Sound of the Element: Called the seed sound or bija mantra, this is the sound the element in this chakra generates.

Attribute: The quality this element provides; also its opposite.

Sound Carrier: The animal or mythical entity, or *vahana,* that carries the seed sound. Every animal reflects a chakric quality.

Petals: Every chakra is portrayed as a lotus, or *padma*, that has a specific number of petals. The petals are also associated with certain sounds, letters, deities, and meanings. Illustration 9 depicts the lotus symbols of each of the chakras.

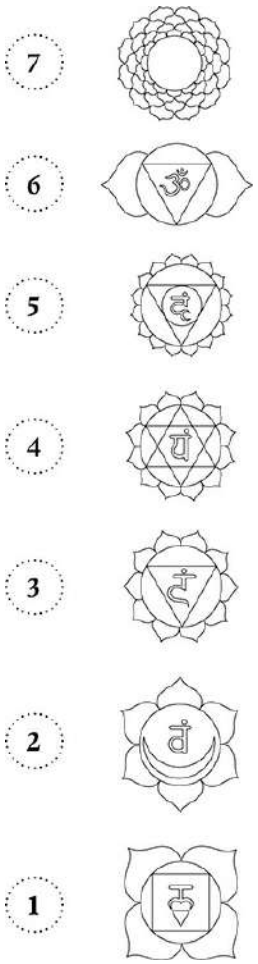


ILLUSTRATION 9—THE SEVEN HINDU CHAKRAS: The seven chakras depicted in lotus form. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Cosmic Realm or Plane: The *loka,* or cosmic plane, associated with this chakra, if applicable.

Ruling Goddess: Hindu goddess or goddesses supervising the chakra. See chapter 16's section "The Evolution of the Hindu Gods."

Ruling God: Hindu god or gods overseeing the chakra. See chapter 16's section "The Evolution of the Hindu Gods."

Ruling Planet: Western and Vedic traditions assign each chakra to a similar or related planet. A chakra can be influenced by its ruling or associated planet more than other planets. There are numerous systems that make such links, which vary in their assignment of the planets to the chakras. I have selected the Western tradition that appears the most frequently in esoteric literature.

Granthi: The granthi, or energetic knots, associated with a chakra, if applicable; also discussed is the relationship between the granthi and the lingam, which is both a term for the symbol of male energy (as I mentioned when I introduced the yantra) and a name for a space in which the whole universe is in the process of forming and dissolving. The relationship between the three granthi and lingams are as follows:

GRANTHI	LOCATION	LINGAM
Brahma	Muladhara	Svayambhu
Vishnu	Anahata	Bhana
Rudra	Ajña	Itara

Intuitive Abilities: The related *siddhi,* or Hindu gifts, and contemporary psychic gifts associated with this chakra.

Related Auric Field and Its Functions: Each chakra is associated with an auric layer. The locations shared in this chapter can be found in my book *The Subtle Body Practice Manual*.[3]

Secondary Chakras: Vital secondary chakras involved with each chakra.

The Hindu Cosmos

The Hindu cosmos is often called the *triloka*, meaning "composed of three worlds": heaven, earth, and the netherworld. In turn, these worlds are divided into fourteen *lokas,* or worlds, specifically mentioned in the *Puranas* and in the *Atharva Veda*. These could be considered spheres or planes of consciousness and are managed or inhabited by various figures.

These cosmic planes are divided into two groups of seven. The first group, called the *vyahrtis*, is found above the earth and is related to human elements. The second group, called the *patalas*, is located below the earth and is considered part of the netherlands. One way to understand these levels is to picture them as the floors of a building. One floor is not better than another; they are simply linked to different deities and, quite frequently, to chakras.

The traits and rules of these lokas, as well as the chakras they are affiliated with, are as follows:

UPPER-WORLD LOKAS OR VYAHRTIS: PLANES OF GODS AND MORTALS

LOKA/CHAKRA	RULER(S)	TRAITS
Note: These first three planes are considered created, meaning they existed before form, and although they are present, they are considered beyond form. Yet other lokas can be called constructive, or made of form; as you shall see, there is one loka that is "in between."		
Satya/sahasrara	Lord Brahma	The Abode of Truth, from which atman, or the enlightened, are released from reincarnation
Tapa/ajña	Demigods	Here the devas shine without heat
Jana/vishuddha	Humans	Here we are considered the sons of Brahma; this region

		corresponds to sound and higher ego
Note: This fourth loka is a region in between the creative and the constructive.		
Mahar/anahata	Enlightened beings	
Note: These are not created planes; they are considered constructive planes and are subordinate to form.		
Svar/manipura	Lord Indra	Located between the sun and polar star, the heavenly paradise of pleasure; hosts 330 million devas or Hindu gods
Bhuvar/svadhisthana	Semi-divine beings	Place of sun, planets, and stars; between earth and sun
Bhur/muladhara	Humans and animals	Place of earth; one of thousands of billions of inhabited worlds
Lower-World Lokas or Patalas: Planes of Demons and Nagas, or Serpents		
The following lokas are all affiliated with the muladhara:		
Atala	Bala, son of Maya, who has mystical powers	Upon entering this loka, a man becomes so intoxicated with sex and addictions he forgets death
Vitala	Hara-Bhava, form of Shiva	Residents are adorned with gold
Sutala	King Bali, a pious demon-king	His name can release people from the gunas, or karmic bondage
Talatala	Maya, a demon-architect	This realm protects Maya
Mahatala	Home of nagas	Serpents live here in peace
Rasatala	Home of demons	Herein are the foes of the gods
Patala	Vasuki	Region of the nagas[4]

The Development and Activation of Our Chakras

When we come into this world our chakras are fully intact, but, like the buds of a flower, each chakra only blossoms under certain conditions. Following is

an investigation of the reasons a chakra "activates," or becomes fully functional.

Some chakras might already be fully mature at birth because of past life or in utero circumstances. For instance, someone who was a monk in a prior life might enter this world with a fully developed seventh chakra, the most spiritual of the in-body chakras. Family strain while a mother is pregnant might galvanize the opening of the fourth chakra, which is relational in nature. In general, however, chakras are inaugurated according to a scheduled time frame that is usually related to human developmental milestones.

Most chakra scholars agree, for example, that the first chakra, which governs primal responses and survival issues, is accessible at birth, if not also in utero. Other experts, myself included, also believe that the seventh chakra is unlocked at the same time, providing a continual stream of spiritual energy to sustain the infant. In my view, this access is reduced when the fontanel of the baby's skull—the membrane-covered openings between the skull bones—closes off; the seventh chakra is then restimulated at a later date.

The importance of understanding the development process of the chakras is multifold. First and foremost, this information can be extremely beneficial to anyone who is raising or caring for children; how helpful to know what concepts and experiences are most important at different time periods in a child's development! For example, when your child's second, or emotional, chakra is undergoing its foundational development, you could pay attention to modeling the appropriate uses of emotions and creativity.

Understanding the initiation time periods of the chakras is a great assist to adults as well. There are several ways to work with this knowledge as chakra medicine. Imagine, for instance, that you have stomach troubles. The stomach relates to the third chakra, which in my system first activates between ages two and a half and four and a half. This chakra relates to personal will, power struggles, fears, and boundaries, and it mirrors the issues you're working on in this stage. If you relate your stomach issues to the third chakra, you could probe the psychological underpinnings related to this time period, perhaps using regression or cognitive therapy techniques to heal the

emotional component of the physical issue. Likewise, you can examine any presenting symptoms, whether physical, psychological, or spiritual, and track them to the originating time period.

There is yet another approach to using your knowledge of chakra development: you can examine memories and link them to their related chakras before performing chakra medicine. For example, I once worked with a client whose family had moved when she was seven. This had been very traumatic for her, as she lost her network of friends and family and couldn't relate to the kids in her new neighborhood. In my system, age seven equates with the fourth chakra. I used chakra-based techniques to help her balance this chakra, and as a result many of my client's psychological issues, including mistrust of others, faded away.

There are many developmental theories regarding the opening of the chakras. I will emphasize my own theory, Anodea Judith's theory, and a somewhat more traditional Hindu system that asserts the chakras open every seven years in numerical order. My own twelve-chakra system is quite similar to Judith's, except that I work with five additional chakras, which allows us to apply the concept of chakra development into adulthood. Following my system is Judith's outline of chakra developmental stages, which also features her chakra stage–based advice for parents. You can return to these recaps when reading about the seven basic chakras in the remaining chapters of part 2 or in relation to any system featured in this book. If there is a particular chakra development sequence associated with a chakra system presented in this book, I will describe it along with that system.

A Twelve-Chakra Development System

Following are the developmental periods of the first seven chakras in my own twelve-chakra system. The higher five chakras and their contributions are outlined in chapter 32's section "Chakras Around the Body."

First chakra	Womb to 6 months
Second chakra	6 months to 2½ years
Third chakra	2½ to 4½ years

Fourth chakra	4½ to 6½ years
Fifth chakra	6½ to 8½ years
Sixth chakra	8½ to 14 years
Seventh chakra	14 to 21 years

During each year beginning at age fourteen—and for every seven-year cycle that follows—the body sequentially reviews an issue from one of the lower chakras and invites healing, reflection, and transformation. I once worked with a fifteen-year-old, for instance, who was experiencing unusually severe emotional upheaval in addition to thinking about his life goals, the latter being the point of the seventh chakra. Emotions equate with the second chakra as well as ages six months to two and a half years. His parents had divorced when he was two years old, and now he was revisiting the emotions he hadn't been able to process at such a young age. After he worked for a few sessions on his feelings about having divorced parents, he stabilized emotionally and returned to his previously happy state. The following list shows the first seven-year reactivation cycle:

Age 14	Recycles first chakra
Age 15	Recycles second chakra
Age 16	Recycles third chakra
Age 17	Recycles fourth chakra
Age 18	Recycles fifth chakra
Age 19	Recycles sixth chakra
Age 20	Completes and recycles seventh chakra

Anodea Judith's Chakra Development System

Parents, teachers, and caretakers are in a wonderful position to assist children in their chakra development. If you find that one of your chakras is blocked because this basic need was unmet when you were a child, you can

work with a healer or therapist to plan a way to meet these needs in adulthood. Here's Judith's system and her advice for each chakra:

First Chakra: Womb to 1 year

Promote the child's embodiment of his or her physical form by using touch, holding, and nurturing. Concentrate on meeting physical needs and playing with the child, establishing trust through bonding and consistency.

Second Chakra: 6 to 18 months

Introduce loving separation as the child "hatches." Help them safely explore the world through the senses and reflect emotions in a positive way.

Third Chakra: 18 months to 3 years

Encourage self-esteem by supporting autonomy and celebrating independence. Provide choices and appropriate discipline.

Fourth Chakra: 4 to 7 years

Model how to behave in relationships, which requires empathy and a sense of morality. Explain how relationships work and organize peer get-togethers.

Fifth Chakra: 8 to 12 years

Support communication and stimulate creativity, even while introducing the child to the greater world.

Sixth Chakra: Adolescence

Assist the adolescent with developing self-identity, creating a safe haven for independence with clear boundaries.

Seventh Chakra: Early adulthood and beyond

Stimulate questions, offer spiritual choices, provide educational opportunities, and let go. It's time for the emerging adult to fly![5]

Chakra Development in the Traditional Hindu System

Many Hindu systems assert that each of the seven in-body chakras opens every seven years. This creates the following system:

Chakra	Activation
First	1 through 7
Second	7 through 14
Third	14 through 21
Fourth	21 through 28
Fifth	28 through 35

The sixth and seventh chakras are often considered unrelated to any given age, although sometimes their activation periods are added to the fifth chakra's stage. For instance, the sixth chakra could be considered potent between the ages of thirty-five and forty-two, and the seventh chakra between forty-two and forty-nine.

The Emotional Challenges of the Chakras

As our kundalini energy rises, we are faced with emotional challenges at every chakra level along the way. In tantric communities, these challenges are often called demons or tricksters, but these terms are derogatory. You could call them "necessary evils," but they are also allies. While they hinder a chakra's operation, we gain wisdom in facing the resulting difficulties. Following is an understanding of what causes some of the main emotional challenges and how such emotions might encumber us. Interestingly, emotions appear to track with the order of the chakras, beginning with fear in the first chakra and progressing upward.

Fear: Evoked when our survival is threatened. Can force energy from the lower to the higher chakras.

Guilt: Prevents us from reaching toward others, obstructing emotional and sexual bonding.

Shame: Deters spontaneity, self-esteem, and our sense of personal power. This can implode our willpower so it works against us.

Grief: Dampens love and the light in our heart, causing us to feel burdened.

Lies: Misinformation that keeps us from relating to the world.

Illusion: When we see situations inaccurately, we miss the big picture and can't perceive truth.

Attachment: Holding on to something or someone when it's pointless impedes our relationship with the Divine.[6]

The Chakra Powers: Psychic Senses and the Siddhi

The extrasensory abilities that seem to defy gravity and all other natural laws are called by many names, including psychism, intuition, magic, sorcery, extrasensory perception (ESP), and prophecy. There are any number of "clairs," such as clairvoyance and clairaudience, as well as the general label of "spiritual gifts." The single word for all these and other supernatural abilities, according to Hindu philosophy, is *siddhi*: paranormal powers that ensue with the rise of kundalini. I first introduced this concept in chapter 2 and will reference its many textual origins throughout section 2.

The appearance of these supernatural abilities follows the maturation of the chakras, which house these latent talents. Paranormal gifts are frequently linked with particular chakras; my own studies and experience have taught me that each chakra expresses through a type of psychic sensitivity. To me, psychism is defined as the unbounded passing of subtle information between the chakras and the external world—both physical and supernatural. Subtle information is not always worthwhile; it is easy to become overloaded by the energies of others or, conversely, to tune out information that could benefit us. If we consciously develop psychic boundaries, we create parameters for our chakras' use of psychic energy and become intuitive rather than merely

psychic. Finally, through psychological and physical purification, as well as spiritual activities, our innate psychic (now intuitive) senses evolve into spiritual gifts that help us achieve our spiritual mission and serve others.

In the following chapters and throughout this book, I link certain chakras with specific ancient siddhis as well as more contemporary understandings of the supernatural gifts. To help you better understand their nature, here I will introduce you to a wide array of Hindu and modern gifts. There is much overlap—and there are many other supernatural abilities besides those named here. In addition, your own spiritual journey might reveal gifts that are unique to you.

The Ancient Hindu Siddhi

Ancient Hindu texts, especially those related to yoga and tantra, emphasized the awakening of siddhi, or supernatural powers, through chakra development. As ancient Shaivism relates, and as Alain Daniélou explains in his book *While the Gods Play*, the ancient Hindus believed that the physical body contains everything we need to exist in material reality, including thought and memory.[7] Higher human faculties are unlimited, although they are imprisoned in the body until they are tapped open by means of the chakras, which aren't limited by time and space. This means that in terms of our extrasensory gifts, the chakras operate like doorways to higher consciousness.

There are three basic types of siddhi powers that might activate upon spiritual enlightenment. These latent abilities—which typically occur among accomplished yogis who have mastered their physical functioning and mental mechanisms—can be organized into three categories: the power of vision (*drik-shakti*), knowledge (*jnana-shakti*), and action (*kriya-shakti*).[8] They are also potentially activated during *diksha*, the tantric term applied to the transference of power from a guru into the heart, body, and soul of a disciple. When the pure energy of an enlightened guru is integrated into a disciple, it erases karma and negative tendencies while opening creative and positive powers such as the siddhi.[9]

The epic Mahabharata lists eight primary siddhis, called *ashta siddhis*, presented by Lord Krishna:

Anima: Atomization—the perception of the infinitely small, such as the atom

Mahima: Immensity—the ability to see the structures of the galaxies

Garima: Gravity—the ability to assume an enormous weight

Laghima: Lightness—levitation

Prapti: Obtainment—the gift of obtaining an object, making it appear out of thin air

Prakamya: Willful movement—enabling transportation of the self to any location

Ishitva: Dominion—assuming control over natural forces such as the wind and rain

Vashitva: Holding of one's power—having power over another, such as through hypnosis[10]

Daniélou also discusses several other siddhis, including *yatrakamavasayitva*, the ability to transform at will, such as from a giant into a blade of grass. Additionally, a yogi can potentially bring the dead back to life and access other powers through incantation and enchantment. Adepts at this level always act with the speed of thought and in the absence of fear, aging, or death. And spiritual yogis don't just meditate; they continually learn, serve, and care for their own bodies.[11]

In the Bhagavata Purana, Lord Krishna describes ten secondary siddhis:

Anurmi-Mattva: Undisturbed by anger and other bodily issues

Dura-Sravana: Hearing faraway sounds

Dura-Darsanam: Seeing faraway things

Manah-Java: Moving the body to follow thought

Kama-Rupam: Assumption of any form

Para-Kaya Pravesanam: Entering others' bodies

Sva-Chanda Mrityuh: Dying when one desires to

Devanam Saha Krida Anudarsanam: Witnessing the pastimes of the gods or angels

Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhihih: Meeting one's objectives

Ajña Apratihata Gatih: Being obeyed without hindrance

The Bhagavata Purana also mentions five siddhis related to yoga and meditation. These include knowledge of the past, present, and future; the ability to tolerate heat and cold; knowing others' minds; being immune to the effects of fire, sun, water, and poison; and the ability to remain unconquered by others.[12]

There are even more siddhis than this—an unknown number, in fact! Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* presents sixty-eight of them, while the saint Ramalinga Swamigal says that there are sixty-four. There are twenty-three siddhis outlined in the Uddhava Gita, and others mentioned elsewhere.[13] And in addition to the siddhis is a separate category called the *riddhis*: the powers of achieving prosperity.

While most practitioners link the siddhis to a kundalini awakening or an evolving sense of spirituality, there is another viewpoint: they are the return of powers—or the activation of powers—that are already viable in other parts of the universe, including the diverse species of humans that exist in other places in the cosmos. The Vedic texts describe 400,000 types of beings who live in the galaxy and are automatically born with active powers. Specific austerities, or purification practices, can help us develop these abilities. (See chapter 33 for a brief review of the belief in ancient astronauts and the human origin in the stars.)

Further, we can gain an object's power by meditating upon it. This means that to look at the sun is to gain access to its view of the planetary system. No matter the mysterious gains these powers can afford us, most adepts remind

us that they can become temptations instead of gifts. We are never to substitute true spiritual enlightenment for the prideful assumption of power.[14]

The mantra *om ashtashiddhipradayai namah* carries the message "I seek the blessings of the goddess who grants the eight siddhis." Chant this silently or aloud to invoke the power of this mantra for yourself.

An Outline of Contemporary Psychic Abilities

Yesterday's siddhis—which are still relevant to kundalini's rising—have now been updated using different terms and ideas. Following is an outline of several psychic or supernatural abilities that are often cultivated by modern mystics. You might notice that many of them are frequently referenced in popular culture, while others are as unfamiliar as those on the ancient Hindu list. All of these subtle abilities are made possible through the activation of the body's subtle energy centers, the chakras.

Aeromancy: Interpreting the shapes of clouds

Afterlife Communication: Connecting with those who are deceased

Alomancy: Reading the patterns of salt cast into the air after it falls to the floor

Apantomancy: Interpreting meaning in chance meetings with animals

Astral Projection: Out-of-body travel; other related terms are lucid dreaming, soul journeying, and remote viewing

Aura Reading: Intuitively perceiving what is occurring in the auric field

Automatic Writing: Writing a message from an outside intelligence through the subconscious mind

Bibliomancy: Interpreting a passage chosen at random from a book

Catoptromancy: Telling fortunes with the help of a mirror

Channeling: Delivering a message from a separate intelligence that enters the practitioner's body

Chirmancy: Palmistry; divination done by interpreting the lines on someone's hands

Clairalience: Ability to smell what's not present

Clairaudience: The ability to psychically hear events

Claircognizant: The sense of clear knowing

Clairempathy: The ability to sense others' emotions

Clairgustance: The ability to psychically taste what isn't physically present

Clairsentience: Ability to sense others' feelings or senses

Clairtangecy/Clairsensitivity: The ability to read energy through touch or from objects in your presence

Clairvoyance: The ability to psychically see nonphysical realities

Cleromancy: Casting stones, bones, or dice to perform divination

Crystallomancy: Seeing the future in a crystal ball

Déjà vu: Sensing that a current event has already occurred

Demonomancy: Summoning demons to answer questions

Divination: Use of psychic gifts to obtain answers

Dowsing (Radiesthesia): Using an instrument to detect water, metals, missing people, or other things in the ground

Dream Interpretation: Interpreting the meaning of dreams

Empathy: Ability to sense others' feelings, illnesses, sensations, knowledge, and more

Exorcism: Release of negative entities

Feng Shui (Geomancy): Shifting the environment to bring about desired effects

Gyromancy: Divination performed by marking a circle's perimeters with letters of the alphabet; ouija boards employ a similar concept

Healing: Creating more wholeness within the other; includes faith healing, the laying on of hands, and more

Horoscopy: Interpretation of astrological horoscopes

Hydromancy: Divining by observing changes in water

Hypnosis: Creation of a trance state in another to evoke answers or healing

I Ching: An ancient Chinese system of divination

Intuition: A catchall word for managed use of psychic abilities

Levitation: Floatation of objects or the body above the ground

Libanomancy: Interpreting shapes in smoke

Mediumship: Serving as a conduit for otherworldly beings

Megagnomy: Use of psychic ability while in a hypnotic state

Oculomancy: Divination by observing another's eyes

Past-Life Regression: Use of a meditative state to remember a previous life

Precognition: Ability to foretell the future

Prophecy: Knowledge of divine will

Psychometry: Gaining knowledge through touch of objects

Pyrokenisis: Sparking fire with the mind

Scrying: Using an object to see psychically

Tarot Reading: Use of tarot cards—or archetypes—to prophesize

Tasseography: Cup divination; interpreting tea leaves or coffee grains

Telekinesis: Ability to move objects without touching them

Telepathy: Hearing mind-to-mind information

Transfiguration: Superimposition of a face on a medium

Voodoo: Practices from the Voodoo religion, such as the use of rituals to ask spirits for advice, protection, or help, and contact with spirits

through their possession of a medium

Xenoglossy: Speaking in a language that is not one's own[15]

Through my work as an intuitive practitioner and teacher, I have observed thousands of clients and their gifts. My take-away is that individuals are unique and that they often display several gifts, and that these are especially powerful when dedicated to a higher purpose. For instance, one young mother is able to sense the location of her three children in their house, which is a physical sort of empathy. Despite their being out of earshot, she once had the sense that her still-crawling baby and his older sister had entered the bathroom. She rushed in to find that her daughter was trying to "bathe" the baby in the toilet—and was nearly drowning the little one!

Another client could see crises that were going to occur in her community. Plagued by this prophetic clairvoyance, she wanted only to turn off the gift. I was able to teach her to manage it instead and then put her in touch with a local police officer, who was actually able to convince the police force to use her abilities to be better prepared for catastrophe.

Yet another client can send energy healing through her left hand to free individuals of cancer; another can make herself feel really small—one of the siddhi gifts—and send her consciousness into another in order to clairvoyantly perceive physical issues such as aneurisms or diseases.

Whatever your gift, know that it will only increase the more willing you are to use it to help others in a way that serves your life as well.

Psychology, Personality, and the Chakras

Our chakra activity corresponds uniquely to our personality characteristics. There are several reasons for this, but the primary one is that most of us live more from certain chakras than from others. Most of us have stronger or more emphasized chakras versus weaker or lesser-used chakras, simply because our life purpose usually requires employing certain gifts rather than others.

Every chakra houses a set of supernatural gifts, or siddhis. Each also regulates a certain section of the body (and bodily functions) and manages a uniform set of emotional and mental capacities. Our spirit, which represents our vital essence, enters the material universe to accomplish a spiritual mission. The fulfillment of this purpose requires the use of particular psychic or spiritual attributes and, most likely, access to particular chakras' physical, emotional, and mental attributes.

For example, consider someone whose spiritual purpose is to heal people who have been emotionally abused. He will require access to his second, or emotional, chakra as well as other chakras involving empathic and communication gifts. Access to physical strength and visual acuity is not as important, unless this special soul feels called to help hurting individuals in the role of police officer. If this lifetime involves walking that path, the individual might need a powerful body, which—as you'll discover in subsequent chapters—relates to the first chakra. If our person in question has instead decided to heal others through being a visual artist, he will require the use of his visual, or sixth, chakra. In other words, your strongest chakras will be those necessary to fulfill your spiritual and life purpose. Inevitably, your chakra strengths—and weaknesses—will serve as major determinants of your personality and psychological profile.

Other factors also shape the access and use of the chakras. These include upbringing, past-life issues, inherited traits, historical and current experiences, cultural influences, and overall psychological programming. Influences such as these can cause certain chakras to be over- or understimulated, resulting in unhealthy personality shifts that don't usually mirror our spiritual essence. For instance, a child who was physically abused might respond by blowing open her first chakra, thus creating a sense of personal and physical power. She might now become pushy, forceful, and frightening to other people.

It is just as likely that our unconscious tends to repress a chakra to help us adapt to external circumstances. Consider the youngster who is shamed every time he discusses a psychic vision; clairvoyance is the territory of the sixth

chakra. He responds with an internal decision to never share another vision again; in fact, why even receive them? As an adult, this person will most likely struggle with self-image and identity issues, which are psychological difficulties related to the sixth chakra.

The assessments of the seven Hindu chakras featured in the following chapters will analyze the major psychological factors they influence. This will include listings of the emotional and mental features of each chakra but also three other dynamics, as follows:

Personality Dynamics: The profile of someone who is strongly gifted or who "lives through" this chakra

Domination: The character disorders caused by an overactive chakra

Repression: The character disorders caused by an underactive chakra

This information will help you figure out your main personality characteristics and assist you in rebalancing a skewed chakra.

In this chapter we've reviewed an astonishing variety of associations with the powerful and complex energy organ known as the chakra, peering through the lens of the Hindu system of seven in-body chakras. In asking what's in a chakra, we've looked at chakra color, location in the body, associated vital breath, psychological factors, and many more chakric aspects. You will encounter all of these categories again in the next seven chapters as we explore each of the seven chakras in depth. I've also introduced you to the stages of chakra development and activation, emotional challenges associated with the movement of kundalini, an impressive array of psychic powers obtained through chakra development, and the connection between chakras and psychology and personality. Along the way, we took a side trip for a quick look at Hindu cosmology—part of the spiritual context within which Hindu chakra lore developed.

With this overview of the seven Hindu chakras as a foundation, you're now prepared for a rigorous investigation of each one. We will begin at the base of

the spine with muladhara—and climb up the chakra ladder one by one as if accompanying the great serpent kundalini on her journey skyward.

[contents]

The First Hindu Chakra

MULADHARA

> FLOOD, FIRE AND quake fling us back to the primal struggle for survival and reveal our gross dependency on mammoth, still mysterious forces.
>
> CAMILLE PAGLIA

The chakra called muladhara, situated between the root of the reproductive organs and the anus at the base of the spinal column, is the home of the sleeping kundalini, the shakti power of transformation and change. Linked with the ida, pingala, and sushumna—the three energy channels that ascend the spine—it is our primal center, responsible for issues related to safety, security, survival, and our basic physical needs.

This complex center, usually depicted as red, takes on our family-of-origin beliefs, which it adds to the karma our soul already carries. Often called the "root chakra," it does just that: roots us into our ancestry, our daily lives, and our fundamental identity. Because of this chakra, we exist, we heal, and we manifest; we make love, we breathe, we work, and we become.

As you review muladhara, the first chakra, from various angles, keep in mind that, in the end, it represents a singular irony. It is the seat of our kundalini, the fire energy often associated with sex, and it is at the core of our human drives and desires. Yet it ultimately reflects the quality of innocence, the pure and childlike joy that imparts honor, dignity, and a reliance on the Divine, no matter what our very human experiences may be. This chakra blesses us all with the love of the Divine Mother, who assists us in overcoming all enemies or temptations within us or outside us.

Now it's time to examine the first Hindu chakra through the prism of the many qualities you explored in chapter 3.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning

The Sanskrit name for the first chakra, also called the base or root chakra, is muladhara. The word combines *mul*, or "base," and *adhara*, or "support," which wonderfully describes the first chakra's main goal: to root and sustain us in our daily life.

Other Names

Other names, given in the later Upanishads, include *adhara* (meaning "support"), brahma, and mulakanda. Tantric texts variously refer to this chakra as adhara, brahma padma, bhumi chakra, chaturdala, chatuhpatra, mula chakra, and mula padma. The *Puranas* use the name adhara.[1]

Location

The first chakra is found at the base of the spine and relates to the sacro-coccygeal nerve plexus. It is found just below the kanda, an energetic organ located between the anus and the root of the reproductive organs. (See "The Kanda: The Nadi Chakra" on page 77.)[2] Some experts believe muladhara lies between the anus and scrotum in men and near the back of the cervix in women.[3] According to the Sat-Cakra Nirupana, the first chakra is two finger-widths above the anus and two finger-widths below the genitals, and it is four fingers wide.[4] It is also frequently described as being found in the hips, at the base of the spine, or in the groin area.

The Kanda: The Nadi Chakra

The kanda chakra, also called the kundalini or nadi chakra, is an energy body located just above muladhara. Found at the junction between the sushumna nadi (the central energy channel running the length of the spine) and muladhara, this white egg-shaped body, which is covered with membranes, is a "home sac" for the

nadis. From this base, the nadis emerge and weave a network through and even beyond the body.

The four petals of muladhara cover each of the four sides of the kanda, and at their junction we find the brahma granthi, discussed later in this chapter.

In the physical body, the end of the spinal cord tapers off into a fine silken thread, including a strand of non-neural fibrous tissue called the filum terminale, which lends support to the spinal cord. This strand of delicate tissue passes downward from the conus medullaris, the tapered lower end of the spinal cord, and is made of two parts. The upper part is about fifteen centimeters long as it reaches the lower border of the second sacral vertebra, and the lower part eventually attaches to the back side of the first segment of the coccyx. Muladhara is often considered to be located at the base of the filum terminale.[5] Also emanating from the conus medullaris is the cauda equina, a bundle of spinal nerves and nerve roots that spread throughout the legs and hip area, including into the perineum and the bladder. This bundle is equated with the kanda. Because of its appearance, the cauda equina was named after a horse's tail.

This association is quite fitting, as many scholars believe that the first chakra is linked to the hips, perineum, and bladder, and that its effects extend downward like a root through the feet, connecting with the earth. As you will see in chapter 34, there are several secondary chakras in the hips, legs, and feet, and in the description of the cauda equina, we find the scientific explanation for these chakras' existence. You can see this part of the body in Illustration 10.[6]

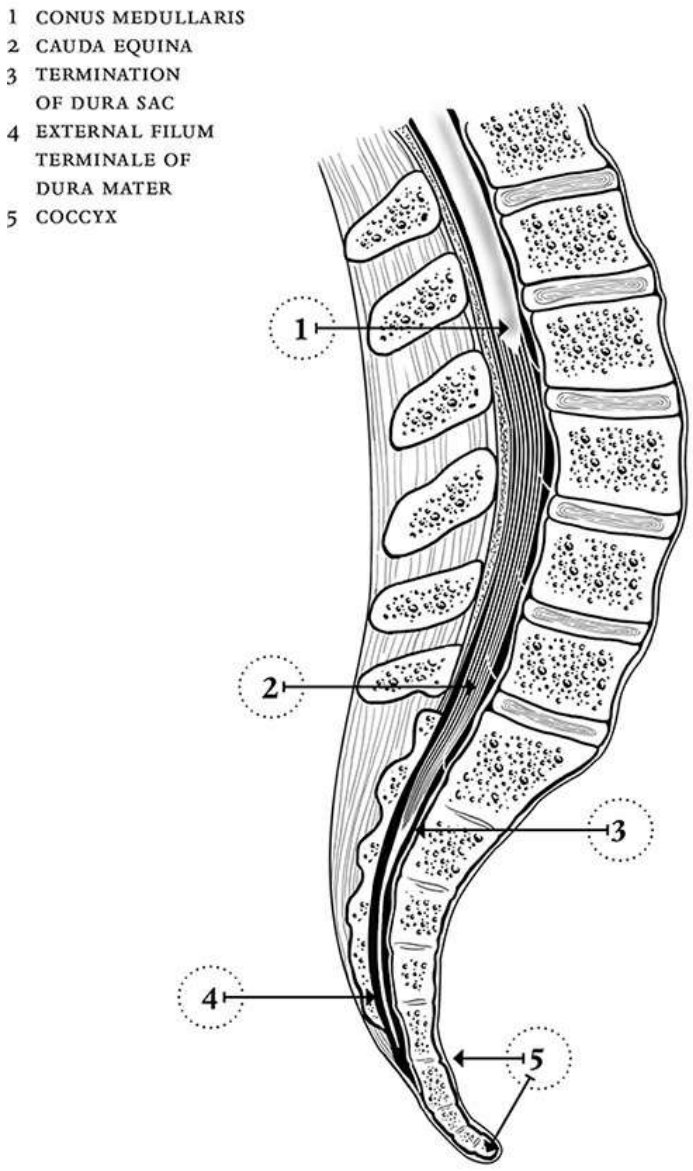


ILLUSTRATION 10—THE MULADHARA AND PARTS OF THE SPINE: The filum terminale is a strand of fibrous tissue that runs down from the conus medullaris in the spine. It is about twenty centimeters in length and supports the spinal cord. Also originating in the conus medullaris are several bundles of spinal nerves that extend into several plexus and down the legs. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

In working with the kanda chakra on clients, I have found that it energetically embodies the physical powerhouse that is this region of the body. I often stimulate this area of the body, either intuitively or working with this nonphysical energy field with my

hands, with clients who are low in energy, dealing with life-and-death issues, or struggling with finances or any other bodily or "real life" issues. At one point I worked on a woman with critical health issues, including several forms of heart disease and cancer. She felt a bolt of energy, and over the next few weeks she found that she could better cope with her various medical treatments. After six months, her issues were seemingly cleared, save the need to continue with several prescription medications.

Purpose

Muladhara rules our physical energies and drives self-preservation.

Color

Muladhara's primary color is red, the color of the goddess Shakti, who represents energy, movement, and awakening. Its secondary color is black, the color representing matter.

Chakra Activation

In Anodea Judith's system, this chakra activates from in utero to one year. In the twelve-chakra system, it awakens in the womb and during the following six months. The Hindu system puts activation from years one to seven, during which time a child acts out "first chakra motivations, such as experiencing the primal needs of eating, drinking, and sleeping as means of becoming secure in the world." [7] At this age a child is, of necessity, self-centered and concerned with survival.

The Adrenals: Muladhara's Endocrine Energy

The root chakra is linked with the adrenal glands, two small organs that lie atop the kidneys. Understanding the physiology and functioning of the adrenals is equivalent to glimpsing the first chakra's vital nature.

The adrenals are often called our "stress glands" because they emit hormones that respond instantaneously to stress. The adrenals are actually two glands in one, with each section influential in its own way. The adrenal cortex secretes steroidal hormones such as cortisol, hydrocortisone, aldosterone, and DHEA, as well as small amounts of testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone, in both men and women. These regulate our long-term response to stress through such activities as monitoring blood sugar levels and balancing fluids.

The adrenal medulla emits adrenaline, the hormone that helps us respond to immediate stress. A burst of adrenaline increases our heart rate, muscle tension, and bodily sweat. This instantaneous response to stress isn't harmful; it helps us respond quickly to change or danger. In fact, having too few adrenal hormones *isn't* helpful; people with chronic fatigue syndrome appear to have underactive adrenal glands.[8] Too much stimulation over time, however, causes the adrenals to malfunction.

After going into hyperdrive following a kick-start from the adrenals, we often experience the opposite: incredible fatigue during the day. Then, ironically, we shift back into high gear at night and are unable to sleep. Signs of adrenal dysfunction include anxiety, insomnia, frequent illnesses, low blood pressure (which eventually can turn into high blood pressure), mental chatter, fluctuating blood sugar, exhaustion following exercise, and emotionalism leading to depression.

In our busy society, we are constantly exposed to adrenal stressors. These range from excessive noise, challenges on the job or in finding suitable work, and an overburdened schedule to experiencing chronic anger, powerlessness, worry, fear, and guilt. We can stress ourselves out by skipping meals, eating too much sugar or junk food, and using addictive substances. We are also

affected by trauma, unrelenting pain, long-term illness (our own or someone else's), allergies, or toxic exposure. Emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual threats to our basic security will also affect our adrenals—and, therefore, our first chakra.

As an energy healer, I have found that almost every client needs to address first chakra or adrenal-based issues. One of the reasons I like working on adrenal challenges from a chakra standpoint is that I'm afforded a full palette of healing options. Resolving imbalances in the first chakra helps my clients psychologically, physically, and spiritually. This is the purpose of chakra medicine.[9]

Associated Gland

Muladhara is associated with the adrenal glands, which are shown in chapter 3's Illustration 8. (See the previous section on the adrenals for a discussion of their functions and effects.)

Body Parts Managed

The first chakra manages an array of body parts, including muscles, bones, hip joints, the coccygeal vertebrae, the immune system generally, the bladder, rectum, the lower extremities (hips and related bones and muscles), the elimination system, the large intestine, and parts of the genitals (for example, the vagina). It also shares responsibility with other chakras for the prostate and kidneys.

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

The sense associated with muladhara is the sense of smell, and the sense organ is the nose.

Action Organ

The action organ is the feet.

Vital Breath

The vital breath is apana, one of the five vital pranas. It is associated with elimination, governing the exhalation of the breath, digestive elimination, and menstruation.[10]

Related Diseases

Illnesses associated with the first chakra include obesity and other eating disorders, hemorrhoids, constipation, sciatica, fibromyalgia, and chronic fatigue; leg, knee, and foot problems, including varicose veins; arthritis, skin problems, and disorders of the bones and teeth; disorders of the bowels, anus, and large intestine; problems with the base of the spine; life-challenging addictions such as heavy drug use and alcoholism; sexual dysfunctions, reproductive issues, blood deficiencies, and more.[11]

Psychological Functions

Muladhara rules all feelings and beliefs contributing to a sense of safety and security. The primary belief governing this chakra is the belief that you are worthy of existing.

This chakra processes all primal feelings, including the five feelings that are typically considered the most basic constellations—anger, sadness, fear, disgust, and joy—and related survival reactions, including rage, resentment, futility, despair, terror, abandonment, rejection, shame, guilt, bliss, oneness, and longing. When our beliefs—usually created in response to experiences in our family of origin—support our identity as a spiritual being, we easily manifest money, love, a desirable career, and optimum physical health. When our eternal identity is compromised—when we believe ourselves unwanted, undeserving, and unworthy—our primary survival needs are compromised, and we might experience insufficient finances, inadequate primary relationships, an unhappy career, and more.

This chakra encompasses our earliest childhood issues in this life but also karma from past lives. Together these components determine the happiness or unhappiness of our current life. We are also responsible for creating karma as we go; this is called *prarabdha karma*. The means to achieving positive karma is learning how to control our *manas,* or mind, as well as our senses,

through discipline (*sadhana*). Within this mix kundalini stirs all seeds to life, activating the positive and negative, so that all our emotional and mental programs are illuminated.

Common traumas related to the first chakra include being exposed to sexual or physical abuse or addictions, money challenges, birthing complications, abandonment, and not being wanted by our parents. What happens if this chakra is emotionally disturbed? There are many symptoms of this, among them lack of safety, security, and trust; inability to manifest; lack of connection to home or primary relationships; disconnection from societal norms; lack of groundedness; and depression, anxiety, or addictions. Someone with psychological imbalances in the first chakra can also be deeply hurt, resentful, or filled with hate and blame toward others.[12]

Associated Archetypes

The positive associated archetype is Mother. According to Carl Jung, this archetype represents maternal sympathy, the magical feminine authority, spiritual transcendence of reason, helpful instincts, and everything that cherishes, sustains, and fosters growth.[13]

Muladhara's negative archetype is that of Victim. According to energy expert Caroline Myss, the Victim archetype alerts us to the possibility of being used for another's gain but can also make us think that our problems aren't our fault.[14]

Personality Profile

Someone highly gifted in the first chakra is physically oriented and desirous of what the physical world has to offer. Their main objective is to meet their own primary needs, especially those related to material concerns, and then they turn to the concerns of others. They feel successful when making a difference in the everyday world, building or creating tangible resources and services. The balanced first chakra person has strong character and tremendous stamina, following their passion to better the tangible world.

Deficiencies and Excesses of the First Chakra

Symptoms of deficiency in the first chakra include a sense of spaciness and

disconnection, being underweight, fear and anxiety, lack of focus or follow-through, self-destructiveness, the sense of being unlovable, masochistic or suicidal tendencies, passivity, financial lack, and poor boundaries.

Symptoms of excess include overeating and being overweight; greed, hoarding, and excessive materiality; hypochondria, paranoia, excessive spending, laziness and fatigue, fear of change, obsession with security, and rigid boundaries.

When the First Chakra Is Balanced

Someone with a balanced first chakra enjoys physical ease, security, and prosperity. He or she is grounded in reality and common sense, energetic, in control of bodily drives, reliable, motivated, adventurous, able to manifest what is needed, and able to be calm and in the moment.[15]

EXERCISE: **A Grounding Tool for Muladhara**

Now we come to the first exercise for working with the seven chakras of the Hindu system.

While either standing or sitting, imagine a beam of light, called a grounding cord, traveling from the top of your head through the base of your spine into the center of the earth. Now picture a white light from the heavens entering the cord at the top of your head. This white light both enters the grounding cord and surrounds and enfolds it.

This heavenly energy uses the grounding cord to wash all impurities, toxins, and unnecessary energies into the center of the earth, which will transmute them through its fiery nature. Once you feel cleansed by the light, allow your spirit—your higher self—to determine which earth elements your body needs in order to nourish, sustain, and empower your physical and energetic body.

You might sense an incoming flow of any number of elements. The Hindu system includes water, air, fire, ether, and earth. I work with a ten-element system that represents elements from all the cultures I've studied because it allows us to customize grounding to our personality and needs. Other elements include stone, wood, metal, light, and star

energy (fire and ether). As you become filled with these basic elements of nature, notice a resulting sense of being present, calm, and renewed. You can also work further to decide whether there are elements you have an affinity for, and you can continue to draw these into your body. For instance, I mainly draw air through my grounding cord. The earth energy many people use makes me feel mopey and stuck, while air uplifts and enthuses me. You can choose from the potpourri I've offered or come up with elements of your own.

In this state of serenity, concentrate for a moment on each of the four promises Hindu sacred scripture has revealed. These constitute your birthright for spiritual development and include the following:

Manana: The right to think and reflect. Ask the Divine what you need to reflect upon in this moment and what you are supposed to do with the resulting awareness.

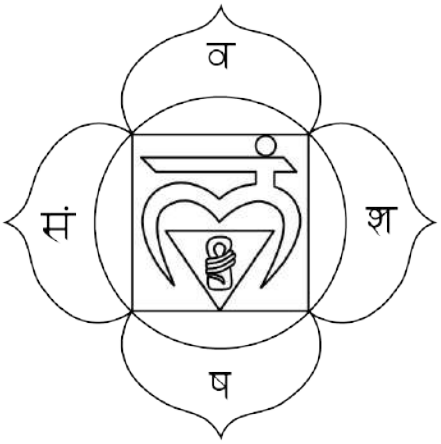
Sankalpa: The right to make positive resolutions. What intentions do you need
to set? What resolution will reflect your true identity?

Vikalpa: The right to remove doubts. What false ideas can the Divine help you release or transform? What doubts—about your own lovability, worthiness, and giftedness—are you ready to let go of?

Atma Chintana: The right to be aware of your own divine self. Ask the Divine to help you pinpoint, embrace, and expand your own true self, now and forevermore.[16]

Take a few breaths and ask your true self to continue accepting the cleansing flow of heavenly white light, as well as the uplifting support of the earth, for as long as needed. Now smile and continue with your day.

Muladhara Symbols: The First Chakra Yantra



The yantra, or representative symbol, for the first chakra is a yellow square surrounded by four red petals and sometimes includes eight spears representing the eight directions. The square contains a downward-pointing triangle; inside is the *bija,* or seed symbol. Above or near this seed symbol are images of the child Brahma, who is colored red and has four faces and arms. In three hands he carries a staff, gourd, and rosary; with his empty hand, he makes a gesture to dispel fear. With him is Shakti Dakini, who is also red and has four arms that hold a spear, a skull-staff, a sword, and a drinking cup. A white elephant is located under the lower point of the triangle (most of these images are not included in the yantra depiction). Also within the yantra is a representation of kundalini, coiled three and a half times around the Shiva lingam.

The inverted triangle is called the *trikona*. Also called *kama*, it represents the dormant kundalini, although it is considered fiery and filled with the energy of desire. It represents the *yoni,* or female energy, and points downward to show that we are in the initial stages of our spiritual development. However, the sides of the triangle spread upward and outward to reflect the direction of a developing consciousness.

The lingam inside symbolizes male energy and is an important Hindu symbol. Black, it represents the color of matter. The Shiva lingam references creativity and consciousness; in fact, the three rotations of the serpent relate to the first three levels of consciousness: unconscious, subconscious, and

conscious. The half-turn refers to the awakened superconsciousness. The serpent head points downward to indicate that we can evolve—or de-evolve. The snake is also known as *kala*, or the collective aspects of time: past, present, and future. Together, the yoni and lingam represent the opposites of the physical world.[17] (See the granthi section on page 86 for further information about the lingam.)

Muladhara's Component Parts

Following are the first chakra's major components:

Gross Element: Earth

Subtle Element: Attraction/smell

Color of the Element: Yellow

Sound of the Element: Lam, the sound of spiritual awakening. This seed sound (bija) is often associated with Indra, the king of the gods and defender of humankind against evil.

Attribute: Patience and greed[18]

Sound Carrier: The elephant (*airavata*) with the seven trunks. In Indian mythology, the elephant represents abundance and wisdom and carries Brahma, the creator. Bringing wealth to the owner, the elephant's brain represents a brilliant pearl of unbelievable value. This is the wisdom that must be raised into higher consciousness. The seven trunks of the elephant also symbolize the seven basic materials of the body, as well as the seven minerals and precious gems in the earth. Finally, the elephant reflects seven levels of consciousness: unconsciousness, subconsciousness, dream consciousness, waking consciousness, astral consciousness, supreme consciousness, and cosmic consciousness.

Petals: Muladhara's lotus is called the *mula kamala* and features four petals representing the four points of the compass as well as the psychic functions of the mind, intellect, consciousness, and ego. The petals also represent the four developmental stages of planetary life: vegetation (such as single-cell organisms), egg-laying animals (including fish,

reptiles, and birds), mammals, and humans.[19] The petals are red and each is imprinted with a letter of gold. These letters are va, sha, sha, and sa. Each represents a vibration of one of four main nadis and is written like this in Sanskrit: व श ष स [20]

Cosmic Realm or Plane

The cosmic plane of muladhara is *bhu loka*; the seven underworlds lie underneath the first chakra and relate to minor chakras in the limbs. These are controlled by muladhara and are featured later in this chapter.

Ruling Goddesses

The most frequently mentioned of these is Dakini, the Shakti of Brahma, previously described in the symbols section. Dakini is the gatekeeper of physical reality.

If Lord Shiva is the featured god in muladhara depictions, other goddesses stand at his side: Asuri Shakti is a destructive influence and Devi Shakti is the counterbalance, a uniting power. Through good deeds and associating with good company, we eventually transform Asuri into Devi.[21]

Ruling Gods

This chakra is usually attributed to Brahma, the creator of physical reality, also described in the symbols section.

Two other gods are often associated with this chakra. Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, grants protection and removes obstacles. The other god, mentioned in the preceding section, is Lord Shiva, specifically the form of Shiva that rules animals and therefore shows us how to manage our animal instincts.[22]

Ruling Planet

The planet ruling muladhara is Saturn, an earthy force that teaches us about our limits.

Granthi (Knot)

Granthi are the locks the kundalini must pass through to ascend. The Brahma granthi, or knot of Brahma, must be unraveled to release the illusion

of the earth as a prison. This knot represents our resistance to change. Once it is opened, our kundalini can rise. This process includes accessing the power of the Shiva lingam, also called the svayambhu lingam; *swayambhu* means "self-reproduced." This lingam assists us in embodying our true selves.

Intuitive Abilities

Siddhis

There are many *siddhis,* or supernatural powers, associated with the activation of this chakra, among them super strength, mastery over earth, and mastery over the five bodily senses, such as smell.[23] As is shared in the Shiva Samhita and the Sat Chakra Nirupana, when the kundalini is awakened, the yogi might also receive *darduri siddhi*, the power to jump like a frog. At this point, he can control his breath, mind, and semen. His (or her) prana can now enter the Brahma nadi, which destroys his sins and guarantees knowledge across time. He can now enjoy bliss, be free of disease, master all esoteric sciences, and attain everything his mind desires. These are often called the "warrior siddhi powers," a fitting name for what starts with a shift in the first chakra.[24]

Contemporary Gifts

These include the most physically oriented of the psychic abilities, such as clairgustance (clear tasting), clairtangency (touching what isn't present), cleromancy (a form of divination), dowsing (detecting things in the ground), feng shui (manipulating the environment), psychometry (gaining knowledge through touch), and telekinesis (moving objects with the mind). These gifts can also play a role in energetic healing, levitation (floating objects in air), morphing (shifting between dimensions), and pyrokinesis (setting fires with the mind).

Subtle Body Partners

Related Auric Field And Its Functions

The related auric field for the first chakra is the first auric layer, which is located just outside the skin and is featured in chapters 20 and 32. Many

practitioners see it interpenetrating the skin and extending about an inch and a half around the entire body.

EXERCISE: **Special Muladhara Mudra Through "Knowing Your Nose"**

Want to access your first chakra? One way is to perform the *nasikagra drishti*, which involves gazing at the tip of your nose until you develop the ability to smell psychic fragrances over time. This practice is also called the *agochari mudra*, the gesture of invisibility. Here is how to perform this exercise:

Sit comfortably and gaze ahead as you normally do, breathing normally. Relax your shoulders and place your palms on your knees.

Slowly move your eyes so you are staring at the tip of your nose. Keep your gaze here for only a few seconds, holding your breath while doing so. If you feel pain, return your gaze to normal.

Repeat this process at one sitting for as long as you can and then return to it at a later time, making sure not to strain your eyes.

Practice for several months and see if you can develop a higher state of consciousness, including the sense of smell if you are thinking about a certain event, person, or situation.[25]

SECONDARY CHAKRAS

It is said that there are seven chakras below muladhara, descending down the leg. They are called *talas,* and along with the seven lokas—each of which relates to one of the seven in-body chakras—they constitute fourteen worlds. A loka is considered a luminous, spiritual sphere, while a tala is a shadowy, material sphere. Originally, these spheres described the various levels of existence; now they are often compared to aspects of consciousness, with one leading to another.[26] The talas, or lower chakras, are as follows:

CHAKRA	LOCATION	GOVERNS
Atala	Hips	Fear and lust
Vitala	Thighs	Anger and resentment

Sutala	Knees	Jealousy
Talatala	Calves	Prolonged confusion and willfulness
Rasatala	Ankles	Selfishness and pure animal nature
Mahatala	Feet	The dark realm, the space without conscience; inner blindness
Patala	Soles of feet	Malice, murder, torture, and hatred; hell[27]

As you've seen, your muladhara, or first chakra, is the base of your existence. Awaiting her climb, kundalini lies coiled within this chakra that regulates safety, security, and your core life and death functions. Colored red, this hip-centered chakra, linked to the adrenals, regulates the physical functions of that area of the body and the legs and feet, planting you in the earth. Located in the coccygeal vertebrae, it is the first one activated when you are young and relates to the sense of smell and the nose, with the active organ based in the feet. Its symbols are a yellow square with four red petals and eight spears, and it responds to the earth element, which is yellow, and the sound "lam." It holds the vital breath of apana and is affiliated with the elephant.

There are several secondary chakras associated with muladhara, including seven realms below the hips and the kanda. Dakini is the goddess and Brahma is the god. Together with the planet Saturn, they help rule this chakra and attract several powerful energies into your life. This chakra is related to the Mother and Victim archetypes and will help you work through greed and gain the attribute of patience.

As we depart the realm of the muladhara on the back of the kundalini serpent, we enter the domain of svadhisthana, the second chakra.

[contents]

The Second Hindu Chakra

SVADHISTHANA

> EMOTIONS, IN MY experience, aren't covered
> by single words.
>
> JEFFREY EUGENIDES

With muladhara forming a stable root system for our very existence, the next chakra, svadhisthana, can flower, inaugurating us into the textures of life, including the complex layers of feelings that help us navigate our reality. Because of this chakra, we both expand into our individuality and reach out to touch others. Here we flow with the element of water to drink from the nectar of life, no matter the ups and downs.

The symbolism of this chakra focuses on the sacred waters of life: the nourishment we exchange with those we love. As you learn about your vital second chakra, prepare to create the basis of a sweet life from the depths of your feelings.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning

The Sanskrit name for the second chakra is svadhisthana. *Sva* means "self" and *adhisthana* means "dwelling place, seat, or residence." The term, then, means "the abode of self."

Other Names

Additional names include several found in the Tantras: adhishthan, bhima, shatpatra, skaddala padma, and wari chakra. Later Upanishads add medhra. Still another name for this chakra is shaddala.[1]

Location

This chakra lies a mere three centimeters above muladhara, between the coccyx and the sacrum, and two inches or so under the navel. More

specifically, it is related to the upper border of the sacrum: the triangular bone in the spinal column wedged between the two hip bones. This site is about halfway between the navel and sex organs and nine inches above the seam of the perineum.[2] The specificity of the preceding locations aside, sources differ, and svadhisthana is variously said to occupy the regions of the genitalia, abdomen, sacrum, or navel (although the latter is usually ascribed to the third chakra). That its nerve plexus lies in the pelvic region, as one might expect, seems settled, yet various sources link it to either the sacral, hypogastric, or prostatic nerve plexus within that area.[3]

Yuga to Yuga: The Changing Nature of Svadhisthana

> An interesting theory about the seat of kundalini emphasizes the importance of the second chakra. According to Hindu philosophy, humankind has lived through four great epochs, or *yugas*. In our current epoch we are basically de-evolving, or moving from spiritual maturity to spiritual immaturity. During the *kali yuga*, the age we currently occupy, kundalini energy resides in the first chakra, muladhara. It is said that in earlier yugas, however, its seat was in the second chakra. The theory is that kundalini has descended—into unconsciousness, as have we—because of the excessive materialism of our age.[4]

Purpose

Svadhisthana rules our emotions, creativity, and sensuality.

Color

This chakra's color is orange, the hue of sunrise and rising consciousness. The color also represents activity and purity and the positive qualities of this chakra, such as joy, faith, and energy.

Chakra Activation

Anodea Judith puts activation of the second chakra at from six to eighteen months. In the twelve-chakra system, activation starts at six months as well but continues until two and a half years of age. The Hindu system shows activation taking place between ages seven and fourteen, during which time a child sleeps eight to ten hours a night, often in a fetal position. The muladhara element of earth dissolves into water, and the child now moves from self-absorption into bonding with family and friends. If one's basic needs are met, it's time to become creative and enjoy the environment.[5]

Associated Gland

The gland corresponding to this chakra is the gonads: testes for men and ovaries for women. (The prostate gland is generally oriented toward the first chakra, but in some systems it is shared between the first and the second chakras.) The testes and ovaries are shown in chapter 3's Illustration 8.

Body Parts Managed

The second chakra manages all of the sexual organs, including the uterus, vagina, and cervix. It also manages the pelvis in general, the lower vertebrae, the appendix, the upper intestines, and parts of the kidneys and digestive organs.

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

The sense associated with svadhisthana is taste, and the sense organ is the tongue.

The Gonads: Svadhisthana's Endocrine Energy

> The main second chakra endocrine gland in men are the testes or testicles. These two oval-shaped reproductive glands produce sperm and testosterone. They lie behind the penis in a pouch of skin called the scrotum.[6]

The prostate gland is shaped like a doughnut and weighs about an ounce. It is located just below the bladder, behind the pubic bone and in front of the rectum. It wraps around the urethra, which carries urine from the bladder to the penis. Its primary job is to help control the flow of urine, and it also assists with creating semen.[7] Most typically, we find the prostate associated with both the first and second chakras in men and fed by the energy of both. It can become damaged or dysfunctional if a man resists the first chakra's life forces or the second chakra's ability to embrace the fullness of emotion and expression. Any distorted beliefs about sexuality, pleasure, or emotion can show up as a problem in the prostate.[8]

The ovaries are the woman's core second chakra endocrine gland. They are a pair of glands, each about the size and shape of an almond, in the female reproductive system. They primarily make estrogen and progesterone and store the eggs that drop into the uterus via the fallopian tubes for fertilization.[9] After menopause, the ovaries stop producing these hormones but continue making testosterone and androstenedione, which provide critical protection against heart disease.[10]

Illustration 8 in chapter 3 shows these parts of the body.

Both the testes and ovaries are dependent on interactions between the pituitary and the hypothalamus, relationships noted in Hindu literature and alluded to later in this chapter, both in the "Left Nostril Breathing to Activate Water and Moon" exercise and in the symbols/yantra section.[11]

What occurs if we have healthy gonads, as well as a healthy relationship between them and our second chakra? In men, the testes can produce an appropriate amount of testosterone, which enables support of the adrenal hormones. For both men and women, the gonads create emotional stability and help magnify

the personality. We can therefore help prevent the inflexibility, stiffening, and sexual repression that can come with age.[12]

It is interesting that the adrenals—which link to muladhara—and the testes and ovaries all relate to the kidney meridian line in Traditional Chinese Medicine. This meridian and the kidney organs themselves are especially vulnerable to excessive stress and sexual abuse, conditions that gravely affect the first and second chakras.[13] As we will further explore in chapter 21, there are many common associations between the meridians and the chakras.

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

The sense associated with svadhisthana is taste, and the sense organ the tongue.

Action Organ

The action organ is the genitals.

Vital Breath

The vital breath is prana.

Related Diseases

Problems of the second chakra result in health issues involving the reproductive and urinary systems, menstruation, sexual dysfunctions, chronic lower back pain, sciatica, joint problems, loss of sensual pleasure, appendicitis, all "itis" diseases of the bowels (such as diverticulitis), and compulsions including carbohydrate addictions.[14]

Psychological Functions

Svadhisthana initiates and sustains bonds between ourselves and other people. Most of these connections are emotional in nature and can form the foundation of both healthy and unhealthy relationships. Basically, this chakra links emotional reaction with emotional attachment.[15]

Within the context of this chakra, we access our sensual nature and therefore our identity relating to the same and opposite sex from the in utero viewpoint. Fantasies and moods can create intense fluctuations as we struggle with desires and the attraction to pleasure.

This chakra can sway us into shortchanging ourselves or indulging in abusive behavior toward others, especially emotionally. An activating kundalini stimulates envy, jealousy, rage, and greed, asking us to face the beliefs we have acquired that cause prejudice, resentment, and complex fears. Basically, we are asked to illuminate our inner shadows and become disciplined enough to create patterns of self-vigilance. We do this by accessing and employing three fundamental types of shakti:

Prana Shakti: vital force

Dharana Shakti: the power of concentration

Chetana Shakti: the power of consciousness

Ultimately we must accept the belief that we are lovable in relationship to others and can trust our emotions to help us steer the way.[16]

I have experienced the emotional power of the second chakra in my client work many, many times. Utmost in my mind is work I did with a man who hadn't maintained a romantic relationship with a woman for longer than two years—and he was fifty years of age. I asked him to describe his relationship with his mother, our mother being our primary template for Shakti, the Mother Goddess, Mother Mary, and the divine feminine, among many other names. Our idea of the feminine goddess serves as our model for female relationships, romantic or otherwise. His mother had been cruel and abusive and seldom held him, and his hurt and anger became the basis for all further relationships. Quite simply, he selected women who prompted these emotional reactions within him. I asked him to imagine what the Divine Mother might really be like and embrace her as his "true" mother. The resulting second chakra shift worked. He has now been married to a lovely and kind woman—one who mirrors the qualities of the Divine Mother, not the human mother—for several years.

Associated Archetypes

The positive archetype tied to svadhisthana is the Emperor/Empress. According to Carl Jung, this archetype represents our inner ruler and our ability to bring our desires to fruition.[17]

The negative associated archetype is the Martyr, who uses suffering to gain pity or establish control yet can transform this tendency to live for a sacred cause.[18]

Personality Profile

Someone who is highly gifted in the second chakra is feeling-sensitive, the emotional heart of any crowd. This expressiveness can stimulate an innate creativity and the desire to leave a unique mark on the world. Emotionally empathic, such a person can be tempted to take care of others' needs instead of their own. But when they take responsibility for their own feelings, values, and sensual desires, the second chakra helps them develop compassion and mercy for all.

Deficiencies and Excesses of the Second Chakra

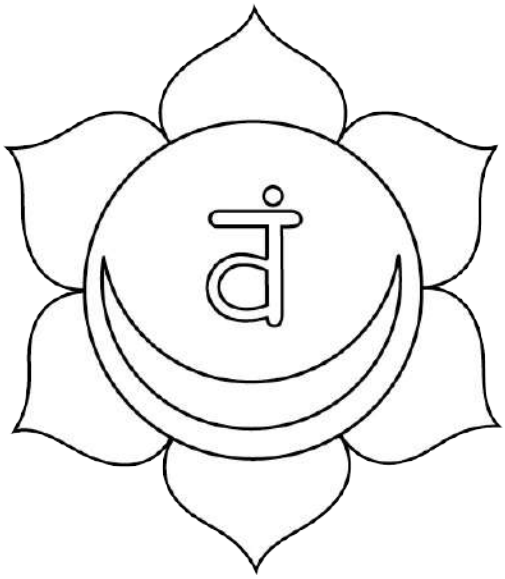
Symptoms of deficiency in svadhisthana include rigidity of both body and beliefs, frigidity, self-denial, fear of change, and lack of social skills, desire, and creativity.

Symptoms of excess include addictions (to sex, romance, shopping, and some substances such as refined carbohydrates and wine), irresponsibility, emotionalism, invasiveness toward others, seductive manipulation, codependency, and obsessive attachments.

When the Second Chakra Is Balanced

When the second chakra is balanced, we enjoy friendliness, vitality, sensuality, the ability to feel satisfied, compassion, sexual expression, and a sense of bondedness.[19]

Svadhisthana Symbols: The Second Chakra Yantra



This yantra, or representative symbol, contains a silver crescent, symbolizing the moon, within a white circle, representing water. The combination of these signs signifies the relationship between water and the moon. The moon is related to the soma chakra, described in chapter 9, but it plays a significant role with the second chakra as well, as we go through many emotional fluctuations during the transformative phases of the moon. As well, because it is associated with the genitals, svadhisthana relates to procreation. In women there is a strong connection between the menstrual cycle and the moon.[20]

Also in this yantra we find Brahma, the "golden womb" or "cosmic egg" from which all knowledge is born, and Rakini, who is described in the section "Ruling Goddesses."[21]

Svadhisthana's Component Parts

These are the major components of the second chakra:

Gross Element: Water

Subtle Element: Attraction/taste

Color of the Element: Color of water (transparent, white, light blue)

Sound of the Element: Vam, which embodies the power of Varuna, an aspect of Vishnu

Attribute: Purity and attachment[22]

Sound Carrier: The crocodile (*makara*) represents sexual vigor and our sensual nature. Consider the nature of the crocodile, which can shift from lethargy to violent power in a flash. Inherent in the second chakra are all the ways of the crocodile, from the laziness of sunbathing to the trickery required to surprise its prey. So we have the choice of being emotionally available or deceptive, based on our desire. The crocodile is representative of Varuna, the lord of the waters, who uses the waters and the Milky Way as his medium.[23]

Petals: There are six petals in the second chakra, each of which links to a different nadi. They are vermillion with a touch of carmine and represent the six *vrittis,* or mental modifications: thoughtforms we must shift in order to mature. These are indulgence, the absence of empathy, destructiveness, delusion, disdain, and suspicion.[24] The letters on these petals (and the sounds of the nadis) are expressed as bam, bham, mam, yam, lam, and ram. In Sanskrit, these letters are written like this:

ब अ म य र ल [25]

EXERCISE: **Left Nostril Breathing to Activate Water and Moon**

Water is intimately tied to the moon, as we see in the influence of the lunar cycle on the sea's tides. The moon's phases influence our body chemistry and emotions, and they link us to the stars.[26]

We automatically evoke lunar energy through our nasal cycle during regular energetic oscillations of the ida and pingala nadis that ascend the spinal column. For sixteen minutes every hour, we breathe primarily through our left nostril; this activates our ida nadi, which is lunar in nature. The ida nadi also stimulates the right side of our brain, which relates to intuition, emotion, and creativity.[27]

To intentionally practice left nostril breathing, I recommend an approach used in swara yoga, which features the science of nasal breath, among other techniques. According to Peter Marchand, who

bases his process on Harish Johari's teachings (Johari is a source of information in this chapter and a recognized expert on the Hindu chakra system), employing the left or lunar nostril cools and alkalizes the body. (This is in contrast to the right nostril, which is featured in the next chapter.)

The nose is of particular importance in achieving chakra balancing as well as physical balancing because it is linked through the olfactory lobe to the hypothalamus, the part of the limbic "fight, flight, or freeze" system that controls emotions and motivations. The hypothalamus is of particular importance in second chakra or emotional matters.

By breathing through the left nostril alone, you enhance your ability to benefit from many activities: playing music, gardening, operating charitably, being of service, participating in marriage, parenting (especially the birthing of a baby), and friendship.[28]

To perform left nostril breathing in a pranayama process called *chandra bhedana*, simply sit in a comfortable position and block your right nostril with one or two fingers. Then inhale through your left nostril. Breathe in through the left and exhale through the right, and do this for one to three minutes. (Avoid this exercise if you have high blood pressure or heart disease.) Also, you will learn several exercises using either one or both nostrils in chapter 14's section "Pranayama: The Breath of Spirit." [29]

EXERCISE: **Increase the Flow of Prana to the Second Chakra**

To produce "vam," one of the sounds of this chakra, shape your lips in a circle and push air through your lips, as if into a tube. At the same time, picture your second chakra. This bija mantra will increase the flow of prana through svadhisthana and remove the insecurities associated with this chakra.

You can also repeat this sound in conjunction with the seed sounds of the six petals, or bam, bham, mam, yam, lam, and ram. This process clears your second chakra and increases your overall energy.

Cosmic Realm or Plane

The cosmic realm of svadhisthana is *bhuvar loka*, the astral plane.

Ruling Goddesses

The most oft-cited goddess is Rakini, or Chakini Shakti, a two-headed, four-armed goddess seated on a red lotus and holding an arrow, skull, drum, and ax. She is one of the many forms of Kundalini Shakti. Her two heads represent the split energy of the second chakra: the difference between "I" and "other." Rakini is the inspiration of art and music.[30]

An alternative goddess associated with svadhisthana is Sarasvati, who holds two simultaneous roles with Brahma as the creator of knowledge: she is both his daughter and his wife. It is Sarasvati who forms his consciousness into knowledge.[31]

Ruling Gods

The most common god assigned second chakra status is Brahma in his form as the consciousness or "golden womb," the creator of knowledge. An alternative depiction is Vishnu as the presiding deity. Vishnu is the lord of preservation who sits on Garuda, the king of birds who represents the five *vayus,* or breaths. His presence indicates the need to manage the release of kundalini through the breath.[32]

EXERCISE: **Meditating on Svadhisthana**

To clear your second chakra and receive its benefits, you can begin with any form of meditation you prefer, from gentle breathing to taking a calming walk. Then let yourself concentrate on these points:

Imagine the moon reflecting off the water. Saturate yourself with the feminine and psychic energies of the moon and the cooling rhythm of the waters. Feel the fluids in your own body finding their right flow and function as the Vishnu powers in your own soul bring restoration to you, linking you to the Milky Way above for the perspective of spiritual truths. The crocodile watches, and you see in him your sensual

qualities—from lethargy to violence—as well as your ability to lie in wait before attacking your goals.

Next, absorb the vermillion or orange-red of the six lotus petals and repeat the bija mantra *vam*, sensing the corresponding nadis in your body opening to healing. Challenges such as lust, anger, greed, and jealousy gradually transform into opportunities for compassion, peace, and understanding. The crocodile begins to smile; with his basic nature understood, now he offers redemption and transformation.

Watch as Brahma opens the cosmic door of consciousness and presents Rakini. Her ax, like a mirror, reflects all that is not spiritual before it cleaves all lies from your soul. Her drum beats with a mantra that restores your natural rhythm, while her spear sings you free from such lotus-petal vices as disdain and delusion. Finally, she holds her skull to your face. You stare into the eyes and see your romantic nature—along with her final gift, the release from the fear of death. Your crocodile nature has now been smoothed into that of a spiritual warrior, one who wages kindness toward love.

You have now furthered your own personal charisma as well as your ability to serve as the beloved of Brahma, holding on to the truth of your life rather than the stories of it.

Ruling Planet

The planet ruling the second chakra is Pluto, for its transformational qualities.

Granthi (Knot)

There is no granthi, or kundalini lock, associated with svadhisthana.

Intuitive Abilities

SIDDHI

Tantric texts say that one who masters this chakra is safe from enemies and becomes like the sun, liberated from the darkness of his or her own ignorance. Now words can flow like nectar, expressing the wealth of wisdom.[33] As well, the second chakra adept loses the fear of water and gains

psychic powers, along with control over the five senses. He or she earns full knowledge of astral entities and the ability to annihilate impurity. Eventually, the second chakra master conquers death.[34]

Contemporary Gifts

These include the most emotionally oriented gifts, including clairempathy and, along with the first chakra, aspects of claircognizance (clear knowing), clairgustance (clear tasting), clairsentience (clear sensing), and clairtangecy (reading the energy of what you can touch or objects you are near).

Subtle Body Partners

Related Auric Field And Its Functions

The second auric layer is located atop the first auric field, about four to five inches above the body's surface. You can read more about it and its functions in chapter 21.

Secondary Chakras

There are no common secondary chakras associated with this chakra.

Your svadhisthana is an orange chakra that allows your creative and emotional functions to stream endlessly. Linked with the sacral vertebrae, this chakra is associated with the testes and ovaries as well as the sense organ of the tongue and the sense of taste. It is activated in childhood, runs the vital breath of prana, and is linked with the Emperor/Empress and Martyr archetypes.

Symbolized by a silver crescent, this watery chakra shines with that white or light-blue element, ringing with the sound *vam* and helping us gain purity and release attachments. With six petals on its lotus, it is also affiliated with the crocodile, which silently carries its sound, and usually with the goddess Rakini and the god Brahma, as well as the planet of Pluto. Here we gain insight into our own and others' emotions.

As our kundalini flows from the second chakra, it enters manipura, the yellow chakra of willpower, located in the solar plexus.

[contents]

The Third Hindu Chakra

MANIPURA

NEARLY ALL MEN can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Shining like the sun, manipura constitutes the third step on kundalini's climb toward the heavens. Here a burst of flame draws in prana and transforms it into vital energies that flow throughout the body. And here gather the nadis that control bodily functions and the digestive process.

We digest and assimilate more than food through this center. In manipura, the "brain of the body," we incorporate wisdom and intuitive knowledge, learning to shape our thoughts according to our will—and ultimately to uphold the will of the Highest One. The result is a strong mind-body connection that enables us to reflect our beliefs in our physical body. As we work through our fears and prejudices, struggling with the ups and downs of ego, we eventually figure out that our inner light is one of brilliance. And what happens when we align our goals with our inner brilliance? Success, both personal and positional, or worldly, is ours.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning

The Sanskrit name for the third chakra can be broken into two parts. *Mani* means "jewel" or "gem"; *pura* means "dwelling place." Thus it can be translated as "city of gems."

Other Names

An additional name is *nabhi*, which means "navel." Tantric names also include dashachchada, dashadala padma, dashapatra, dashapatrambuja,

manipuraka, nabhipadma, and nabhipankaja.[1]

Location

This chakra is found in the solar or gastric plexus, in the part of the vertebral column behind our stomach area. Its effect radiates seven centimeters above and below the navel. If we are feeling stressed, we may be able to feel this nerve plexus as a tight knot just below the sternum.[2]

Manipura is often referred to as the solar plexus or navel chakra.

Purpose

Manipura is the energy center of personal power, mental activity, self-esteem, and willpower.

Does Kundalini Start in Manipura?

According to Buddhist theory, as well as many tantric texts, "real" kundalini activation starts in manipura, not in muladhara as is more commonly thought. The thinking is that the previous two chakra stopping points, the first and second chakras, are higher realms of our animal selves, while human consciousness actually begins at manipura and becomes refined as kundalini energy moves upward.

Because the third chakra is of a higher order than the ones below it, many practitioners believe that reaching the third chakra during a kundalini rising secures a fail-safe environment. The sincere aspirant cannot fall back down the ladder; his or her consciousness now can only rise. Still other practitioners believe that kundalini is more like a vertical accordion and can slip all the way back to muladhara from any perch, including the crown chakra.

Whether or not the manipura is truly fail-safe, it plays a significant role in kundalini's rising. It is certain that several forms of prana—the cosmic collection of the five vital forces—

use manipura as a conjunction point. For instance, according to some devotees of Swami Sivananda, a Hindu spiritual teacher who founded the Divine Light Society in 1936 and practiced many forms of yoga, when the prana of the first chakra rises to manipura, the prana of the solar plexus can ascend to the throat. When the prana falls from the throat back to manipura, so does the prana tumble to the first chakra. Basically, karmic issues can prevent these pranic forces from merging in manipura until they have been worked through.

Traditionally, breathing exercises (*pranayama*) serve as vital tools to assist with the control of the major pranas. When an aspirant's issues are cleared—when higher consciousness is achieved—the vital force of manipura, samana, is able to move from the periphery of the body into the core. This "implosion" can spark an upward rise, like providing fuel for a rocket.[3]

Color

Manipura's color is yellow, which represents wisdom and intellect.

Chakra Activation

Anodea Judith sees manipura's activation taking place at between eighteen months and three years of age. The twelve-chakra system places activation a little later, at between two and a half and four and a half years of age.

The Hindu system sees activation taking place between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, during which time a person is impelled to develop ego and worldly identity. This striving for personal power can lead to selfless service —or sorrow.[4]

Associated Gland

The gland that relates to manipura is the pancreas. See Illustration 8 and Illustration 11.

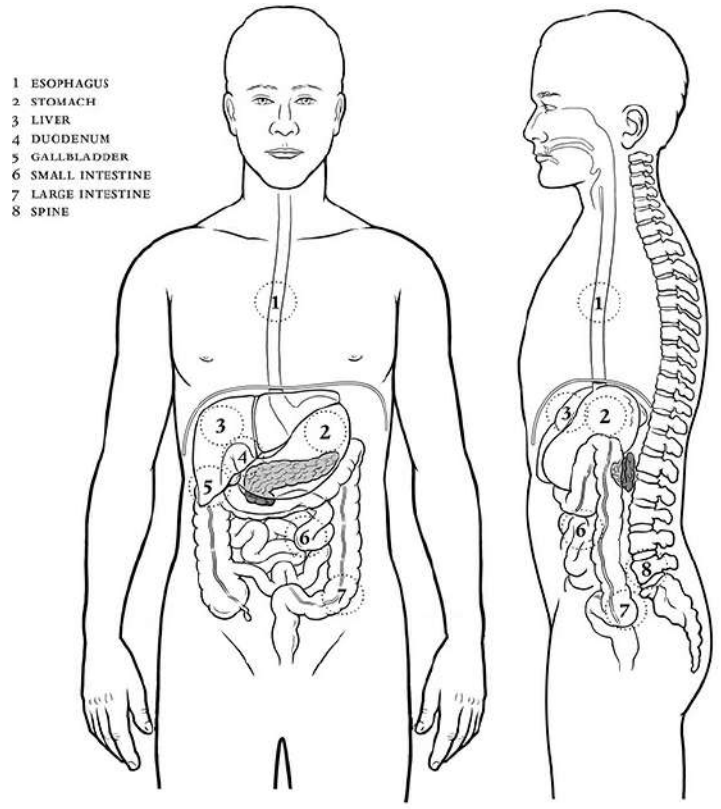


ILLUSTRATION 11—THE PANCREAS: The pancreas (shaded in gray) is located near several digestive organs associated with the manipura. Although the esophagus is linked with the throat chakra, it provides entry into the digestive organs. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Body Parts Managed

The third chakra manages the digestive system and organs, skin, breath, upper abdomen, diaphragm, middle spine, small intestines, and parts of the kidneys and adrenals, particularly the adrenal cortex.

The Pancreas: Manipura's Endocrine Energy

The pancreas is manipura's companion hormone gland. It is an oblong, flat organ located deep in the abdomen and under the left rib cage. One part lies between the stomach and spine and another part lies nestled in the curve of the small intestine. The

head of the pancreas is positioned at the third lumbar vertebra. Illustration 11 shows these parts of the body.

The pancreas is an important part of the digestive system, serving two functions at once. As an endocrine gland, it releases juices, including hormones and enzymes, directly into the bloodstream. It is also an exocrine gland because it releases juices into ducts. In fact, about 95 percent of the pancreas functions as an exocrine gland, producing enzymes that aid in digestion. The best-known pancreatic hormone is insulin, which is secreted into the bloodstream to regulate the body's sugar levels.[5]

The link between the manipura chakra and the pancreas means that problems with the pancreas can cause imbalances in manipura (and vice versa). One way to assess the relationship between the two is to assess the placement of your pancreas. If it is in the right position, you will feel a pulse at the center of your navel. If you are experiencing headaches, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fatigue, anxiety, or certain other conditions, your pancreas might be displaced.

For instance, a pulse located above and to the left of the navel could indicate the potential for respiratory disorders; to the left, emotional problems; and to the right, energy blockages. Finding the pulse to the right and below the navel indicates digestive disorders.[6]

Interestingly, the mudra exercise of breathing through the right nostril, as indicated in the "Firing Up Your Manipura" exercise, can help rebalance or reposition your pancreas. The key is to restore the *nada*—the pulse beat of the universe—in the manipura, a home to this sacred sound. You can also chant mantras, as indicated in the following exercise.

ॐ

EXERCISE: **Sounding the Universe Through Your Manipura**

The manipura is often considered the source of words, which makes it particularly responsive to sound. Check for the accuracy of this statement by conducting this exercise:

Place your thumb on your navel and say a word out loud. Pay attention and you will sense the vibration of the sound before it emanates from your lips. The vibration starts in the navel, rises to the larynx, and is then produced as audible sound.

Besides using the bija mantra *ram*, you can also repeat the mantra *om shanti* to clear your manipura and clear the messages you deliver to the world. *Om* is the original sound of the Divine, and *shanti* means "peace." Yet another beautiful mantra is this one: *om mani padme hum, which* means "my adoration to the lotus feet of the master" or "my adoration to the master of the jeweled city." The vibrations of this mantra free us from inner tensions and activate the potential of the manipura.[7]

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

The sense associated with manipura is sight, and the sense organ is the eyes.

Action Organ

The action organ is the anus.

Vital Breath

The vital breath is samana, which controls the digestive fire.[8]

Related Diseases

Health issues of the third chakra can be related to the digestive system, diabetes, pancreatitis, kidney and adrenal imbalance, low blood pressure, certain colon diseases, stomach ulcers, certain food disorders (such as anorexia and bulimia), hepatitis, heartburn, hypoglycemia, chronic fatigue, muscular disorders, hypoglycemia, and "leaky gut" syndrome caused by bodily toxicity and leakage of toxins into the bloodstream through the walls of the small intestine.[9]

Psychological Functions

The psychological center point of the manipura is personal power, which is affected by beliefs and emotions related to our ego. Within this chakra space we determine our sense of value and our ability to carry out decisions, but only if we are able to shift from making decisions based on karma, or the consequences of our past, to dharma, or selfless service. By learning how to practice charity in all we do, we automatically feel successful, no matter our external circumstances.

Blockages often manifest as pride, anger, fear, prejudice, or victimization. We can become too sensitive to criticism or, conversely, critical of others. Similarly, we may be manipulated emotionally or become emotionally manipulative ourselves. While it's important to realize we can manipulate others or even ideas, continuing down this path invariably leads to the development of control issues and a false sense of grandeur.

The core importance of manipura chakra is the development of personal beliefs, which are the product of thoughts strung together with observations. They are then cemented in place through inner dialogue. If we overindulge in our own mental constructs, we can fall prey to mental chatter and anxiety. If we ignore our intellect, our mind can become lethargic and we will lack conviction. Just as manipura digests food, so it also digests ideas. The beliefs formulated within the cauldron of this chakra will steer our thoughts and, therefore, our behaviors.[10]

The importance of beliefs and the third chakra was highlighted in my work with an "almost successful" jewelry designer. He had grown up being told that he was too effeminate in comparison to his football-playing older brothers; hence, every time he found himself about to sign a lucrative design contract, the situation fell apart. We discovered that he was unconsciously sabotaging himself in order to appear more "masculine." Financial success was perceived as drawing attention to his too-creative faculties. Once he was able to dismantle the belief that his personality was "less manly" because he was creative, his third chakra became more balanced, and the next contract on the table went through.

Associated Archetypes

The positive archetype of the third chakra is the Warrior. This archetype provides a person with an unsurpassable source of power that can be used for achieving worthy causes and making a difference.[11]

The negative archetype is that of Servant. All too often, the Servant helps others to the exclusion of the self, perhaps secretly hoping for recognition or praise. If used beneficially, however, this approach can enable personal empowerment toward higher service and does not have to remain a negative symbol.[12]

Personality Profile

If you are strong in the third chakra energy center, you are a thinker. You revel in ideas, facts, information, and concepts and are driven to organize this information into understandable systems. Because of this you are a great organizer and administrator. You have the ability to set up the structures necessary to meet your own or others' goals. Your spiritual destiny will, without a doubt, include working mindfully with knowledge to structure information processes.

Deficiencies and Excesses of the Third Chakra

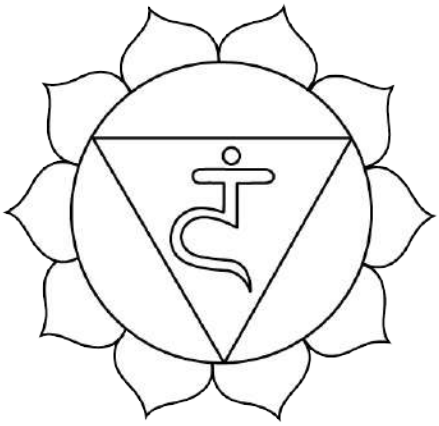
Deficiencies in this energy center include low self-esteem, low self-confidence, contracted energy, unhappiness with one's life situation, being easily manipulated, and having poor self-
discipline or poor digestion. It may also manifest as a victim mentality, unreliability, passivity, and a blaming attitude.

Excesses here include controlling, aggressive, dominating behavior; the need to be right, stubbornness, egotism, hyperactivity, pride, and competition.

When the Third Chakra Is Balanced

A balanced third chakra results in healthy assertiveness, cooperation, and dynamic energy; intelligence, decisiveness, productivity, and mental focus; a healthy digestive system and overall good physical health; and a healthy relationship with the greater world, especially in the realm of work.[13]

Manipura Symbols: The Third Chakra Yantra



The focal point of this yantra, or representative symbol, is a downward-pointing triangle within a circle. In many versions of the yantra (but not this one), a T-shape is depicted on each side of the triangle. Taken together, these Ts make up a form of swastika, a Sanskrit symbol for well-being and universal welfare. According to the Sat Chakra Purana, the swastika denotes good luck, whether the legs are bent clockwise or counterclockwise—or, in this case, are straight. In manipura, the swastikas emphasize the nature of fire, which is to rise and transform.[14]

EXERCISE: **Firing Up Your Manipura**

Your third chakra is like a sun, a center in which energy bursts into being as kundalini joins together various forms of prana. To enable this process, as well as reduce potential danger from the resulting combustion, I recommend using the mrigi mudra to breathe through the right nostril alone. This mudra is a companion to the chandra bhedana explored in our last chapter, which enables breathing through the left, lunar nostril.

The right nostril links with the pingala nadi, which is associated with the left-brain hemisphere and our rational, logical mind as well as masculine, verbal, and physical activities. This nostril is solar in nature, increasing bodily heat and acidic secretions. As I mentioned in the last chapter, we naturally switch between left and right nostrils during the

day, with the most precise transition at dawn and dusk. To deliberately use only the right nostril is to emphasize chakras that are firelike in nature, such as the third. This exercise will also help you with activities related to the third chakra, such as working hard, writing, debating, and undergoing spiritual practices.[15]

To perform right nostril breathing, sit in a comfortable position and block your left nostril with one or two fingers and then inhale through your right nostril. Breathe in through the right nostril and exhale through the left for one to three minutes. (Avoid this exercise if you have high blood pressure or heart disease. Do not perform mrigi mudra and chandra bhedana on the same day.)[16]

Manipura's Component Parts

Following are the major components of manipura:

Gross Element: Fire, which relates to the Hindu theory that digestion is accomplished through heat; here both food and ideas are burned to formulate vital energy.

Subtle Element: Form/sight

Color of the Element: Fire red

Sound of the Element: Ram

Attribute: Achievement and supremacy [17]

Sound Carrier: Ram promotes the spiritual, imparting virtues such as strength, wisdom, and bravery. The vehicle of the fire god Agni, it depicts our third chakra qualities, promoting steadfastness: the refusal to give up.[18]

Petals: Manipura has ten blue petals—like the blue at the center of a super-hot flame. This makes the chakra both constructive and destructive. The letters on each of the petals (and the sounds of the nadis) are pham, dam, dham, nam, tam, tham, dam, dham, nam, and pam. These petals indicate the following obstacles to reform: spiritual ignorance, treachery, jealousy, shame, delusion, disgust, fear,

foolishness, thirst, and sadness.[19] The letters on the petals appear like this: फं डं ढं णं तं थं दं धं नं पं फ़ं [20]

Cosmic Realm or Plane

The cosmic realm of manipura is *svar loka*: the celestial plane, or heaven.

Ruling Goddess

Lakini Shakti, also known as Bhadra Kali, is the primary goddess associated with manipura and is a compassionate form of Kali, the ferocious goddess. Her three faces reflect the scope of vision employed by the third chakra. In her four arms she holds a thunderbolt, an arrow, fire, and a mudra that grants boons and cancels fear.[21]

Ruling God

Manipura's associated god is Rudra, also called Old Shiva. This is the wrathful form of Shiva who represents the power of destruction. His name comes from the root *rud*, which means "crying," signifying the lamentation of endings. He is red with anger but also white or gray, as his body is covered with ashes. He sits on a tiger skin and is dressed in one as well, also holding a trident and a drum. Adorned with snakes, he dispels both fear and anger.[22]

EXERCISE: **Pit Pose for Manipura Chakra**

One way to physically balance the manipura is to conduct the pit pose. Lie on your stomach and put your fists or hands, one atop the other, under your solar plexus and a few inches above your navel. Breathe long and deep, pressing your hands into your navel while allowing your breathing to massage your abdomen. After a minute, withdraw your hands and relax.[23]

Ruling Planet

Manipura is ruled by the sun, a force supportive of individuality and self-expression.

Granthi (Knot)

There is no granthi, or kundalini knot, associated with manipura.

Intuitive Abilities

Siddhi

According to the Gheranda Samhita, the third chakra yogi is granted the *patala siddi*, acquiring hidden treasures and freedom from disease. They are released from the power of fire; even if thrown into fire, they will remain safe.[24] This yogi conquers the ravages of times and can live an extraordinarily long life, discovering cures for illnesses and obtaining a deep understanding of physiology. The power to create and destroy becomes obvious, as well as the ability to make gold and find hidden treasures.[25]

Contemporary Gifts

The main contemporary ability is claircognizance, or mental empathy; another gift is pyrokenisis, or setting fires with the mind.

Subtle Body Partners

Related Auric Field And Its Functions

The third auric layer is located atop the second auric field, about eight to ten inches away from the body, and is featured in chapters 20 and 32.

Secondary Chakras

There are two main secondary chakras associated with manipura. The first is the surya chakra, which is also called the hrit chakra and is described in the next chapter. Its relationship with manipura is mainly associated with its ability to provide manipura with the element of heat. In Tibetan Buddhism this chakra is called the "fire wheel." This chakra is also mentioned in the following chapter.

The other chakra frequently associated in manipura is *manas,* or the mind chakra. It is usually located between the heart and the navel, close to surya and sometimes above the ajña chakra on the forehead. When found in the lower part of the body, it is linked to five sense objects plus the mind. On the forehead it is depicted with six petals. In Tibetan Buddhism it is found on the forehead, called the wind wheel, and has six spokes. (The Tibetan system is described in chapter 24.)[26]

Other chakras are often linked to manipura in different cultural systems. Besides those associated with the Kabbalah, which are covered in chapter 28, another is the Japanese energy center hara, our physical and energetic core. Sometimes hara is linked with all three lower chakras, not only the third. (Hara is further discussed in chapter 25.) The other center is found in Taoism and is called the Door of Life, or *ming men.* It is similar to manipura in that it has ten petals (although in Tibetan Buddhism it has sixty-four petals). These petals are black, dark green, or dark blue. Like manipura, it is a fire center, but it is associated with the kidneys rather than the pancreas. Considered a minor chakra, its placement on the body is found in Illustration 65.[27]

This bright yellow chakra is your center of personal power and willpower—and, appropriately, the home of the red fire element. Located in the solar plexus and linked to the solar plexus vertebrae, it is also associated with the pancreas and regulates the organs in that area. Its action organ is the anus, and it is also associated with the eyes and the sense of light. It is here that we indulge in *svar loka*, the celestial plane, and access hidden powers as well as gifts such as mental empathy.

Symbolized by a downward triangle within a circle, this ten-petalled chakra helps us gain achievement and defeat the inclination to be supreme. Its sound, *ram*, is carried by a ram and the goddess Lakini Shakti. Along with the god Rudra, this goddess uses the energy of the sun to help you manage your life. Activated while we're young, this chakra assists us with deciding how to interact with the world.

It is now time to journey to the heart chakra, or anahata, where kundalini begins to transform into a being of love.

[contents]

The Fourth Hindu Chakra

ANAHATA

> THIS IS MY simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.
>
> DALAI LAMA

The fourth chakra is often referred to as the heart chakra. It is through the energy of this chakra that we become able to make decisions beyond the bounds of our karma—decisions that invite us to truly follow our hearts and serve without concern for the desires of the lower realms. It is here where we confront the shadows of life, including lust, defiance, and anxiety, but in such a way that, through devotion to compassion and honor, all is made well, including ourselves.

With the awakening of anahata we come to realize that in the void of silence within this energy center, we can transcend our temptations toward violence. What counts here are matters of the heart and only the heart, which begin—and end—in love.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning

Anahata can be translated as "unstruck sound." It can also mean "unhurt" and "unbeaten." One of the reasons for these "un" names is that as the various pranas, or vital breaths, flow through the sushumna—the central energy channel along the spine—and into the manipura, after which the "seed sounds" (*bijas*) of the alphabet automatically appear in the fourth chakra. These sounds vary depending on the shape and breadth of the different nadis; the more powerful the pressure of the air on the chakra, the more pronounced

the seed sound. The important thing to note is that the sounds of these letters are generated without external friction, which is the vibration of sound waves that we usually associate with sound. Hence the term *unstruck sound*.[1]

Other Names

Tantric names for the fourth chakra include anahata-puri, dwadasha, dwadashadala, h'idayambhoja, hridabja, hridambhoja, hridambuja, hridaya, hridaya kamala, hridayabja, hridayambuja, hridayasarasija, hrit padma, hritpankaja, hritpankeruha, hritpatra, hritsaroruha, padma-sundara, and surayasangkhyadala. Later Upanishad names include dwadashara chakra and hridaya chakra.[2]

Location

Anahata is found between the breasts, in the heart region. It is aligned with the sushumna nadi, which is the source of its sound. It technically divides the body into a lower and an upper hemisphere, with the lower centers representing the more primitive forms of consciousness—such as those involved with the physical world and pleasure-seeking—and the higher chakras interacting with the realms of spiritual consciousness.

This chakra corresponds to the cardiac plexus, a collection of nerves at the base of the heart that innervate it. Also linked to this plexus is the epicardium, the membrane forming the innermost layer of the pericardium and the outer surface of the heart, and a number of the cardiac branches from the vagus nerves as well as several sympathetic nerve trunks and other ganglia. The vagus nerve extends all the way from the brain stem into the abdomen, and—as is proposed in the section "The 'Second Brain'" in chapter 21—this nerve is able to measure what is occurring throughout the body.[3]

Purpose

Anahata is the energy center of love and relationships.

Anahata as the Seat of Jivatnam

Jiva is a word representing the individual self that exists within all living creatures. Its foundation is the heart—not the physical heart but a spiritual one, lying on the right side of the chest about two inches above the center of the physical heart and a little below the right nipple. Jiva has no form; rather, it is a pervasive light that spreads from a point called the "seat of jivatnam." We can only perceive it—in others or ourselves—when we've attained purity of mind and are free from earthly desires.

In part 1 we took our first look at various forms of energy, including gross and subtle energy. I also identified a form of energy called "causal energy." We will further investigate this form later in the book, but let me briefly define it here as the energy that determines what will occur on the subtle levels of reality, which in turn directs the gross, or physical, energies of this world. The seat of jivatnam enables us to learn and expand through all three of these energies as well as the five sheaths, or koshas, originally described in chapter 2. Through the gross, or physical, body we learn about work, joy, and suffering in the waking state. Through our subtle, or causal, body we explore these avenues in the dream state, wherein dwell our mind, intellect, and ego. As we move through the lessons of the lower four koshas into the most advanced and joyful one, the anandamaya kosha, the jiva associates with the causal body and all forms of happiness.[4]

There are three basic types of individual selves, or *jivas*, as follows:

Nityas: Those who enjoy supreme bliss, are omniscient, and are not subject to karma or matter.

Muktas: Those who attain liberation in this evolution and have become omniscient.

Baddhas: Those who are still subject to matter, ignorance, and karma. It is important to understand that karma isn't "bad"; it is the result of the conscious action of our internal jivatnam. It does, however, ask us to transform undesirable forces such as hatred and desire (which link us with matter), accept self-responsibility, and become perfected in wisdom, power, and love.[5]

Color

The color of the fourth or heart chakra is green. This chakra also has a secondary color: pink.

Chakra Activation

Anodea Judith places activation of anahata in the range of four to seven years of age. This is roughly the same as what I've found in my twelve-chakra system: ages four and a half to six and a half. The Hindu system describes activation taking place in the period between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-eight, during which time we become aware of our karma, or the results of our personal actions. Our motivating force now needs to become bhakti, or love and devotion, which enables balance on every level.[6]

Associated Glands

Two organs are associated with the heart chakra: the heart itself—which we now know is an endocrine gland as well as the familiar circulatory pump—and the thymus gland. (See "The Two Possible Endocrine Glands for Anahata" section.) These can both be seen in chapter 3's Illustration 8.

Body Parts Managed

Anahata manages the heart, circulatory system, blood, lungs, rib cage, breasts, shoulders, arms, hands, and, along with other chakras, the diaphragm and esophagus.

The Two Possible Endocrine Glands for Anahata

There are two philosophies about which gland is most closely associated with anahata: one group believes the heart is its endocrine gland, while the other votes for the thymus.

The heart is a fist-sized muscle that pumps blood twenty-four hours a day. It is made of four parts: two atria on the top and two ventricles on the bottom. It is fed by coronary arteries that run along its surface, providing oxygen-rich blood for its own use. Valves connect these chambers, and nerve tissues run through the heart, helping conduct the complex signals that keep the heart beating.

Scientists have discovered that the heart is more than a circulatory organ; it is also an endocrine gland, producing and secreting a rich array of hormones and neurotransmitters. These hormones include oxytocin, the "love bonding" hormone, which is also made in the brain. Because of its unique capabilities, the heart operates almost like a brain unto itself, transmitting signals sent to the brain along the vagus nerve and spinal column to influence our nervous and endocrine systems, our digestive and urinary tracts, our spleen, our respiratory and lymph systems, and numerous brain activities. Positive emotions cause the brain to produce optimum effects in our body; they also improve our financial earning power and relationships. Conversely, challenging emotions such as fear and anger negatively affect all aspects of our lives. The well-substantiated research that demonstrates these effects suggests that the ancients knew well that the heart is the center of love—and that all good things come from love.[7]

Many systems consider the thymus gland the hormone gland for anahata. This fascinating organ is located in the center of the upper chest, in front of the backbone. Consisting of two lobes that join in front of the trachea, it processes many of the white blood cells produced in bone marrow and converts them into T-cells. T-cells help orchestrate the immune system, scanning for abnormalities and infections and rousing the response of the entire immune system when they find them. It is interesting that the thymus gland is active during gestation and through to puberty, when it begins to shrink. For instance, it weighs 15 grams at birth, 35 grams during puberty, 25 grams at age twenty-five, less than 15 grams at age sixty, and about 6 grams at seventy years of age.[8]

In systems that associate the anahata with the heart, the thymus is still important. Sometimes it is called the "high heart" and considered integral to a maturing humanity. In other systems it is seen as another major chakra, and at the least a minor one. In my twelve-chakra system, the thymus is the hormone gland associated with the eighth or shamanic chakra, which occupies a space above the head and is featured in chapter 32. It is also considered an etheric center or an emerging transpersonal chakra in systems such as those featured in chapter 34.[9]

According to Richard Gerber, MD, author of *Vibrational Medicine*, the thymus gland is a minor chakra but is also influenced by the activity of the heart chakra.[10] Even though the thymus decreases in size as we age, Gerber points out that it continues to produce hormones, including thymosins, which affect our immunity. One of its many vital roles is to keep certain lymphocytes called T-suppressor cells in check, so that our protective cells only attack dangerous invaders or cancer cells, not our own cells.[11] When these cells don't function or function insufficiently, we develop autoimmune dysfunctions. There are

more than eighty known types of autoimmune dysfunctions, conditions in which our immune "drill sergeants" attack our own cells instead of foreign marauders or our own mutated cells (which can develop into cancer). Autoimmune disorders include many cancers, heart disease, chronic fatigue, and arthritis.

According to Gerber, medical researchers have yet to realize that the flow of prana through the heart chakra determines the function of the thymus and therefore our body's immune competence. Just as the heart responds to emotions, the thymus reacts positively or negatively to the emotions of the heart. In a nutshell, limiting emotions in the heart can set us up for autoimmune disorders. Gerber believes the key to a healthy heart and thymus is love of self.[12] Some chakra experts equate the thymus gland with our will to live, measuring and reflecting our level of hope or hopelessness. According to naturopath Dr. Valerie Seeman Gersch, we can bolster our thymus function simply by tapping the gland, as well as by listening to relaxing music, meditating, eating organic foods, wearing natural clothing, and participating in positive physical and social environments. This also means the reverse is true: it's important to refrain from overstimulating music, synthetic materials, chemically laden products, processed food, and negative attitudes and environments.[13]

I locate the anahata chakra in the heart. The heart truly is the center of the physical, psychological, and spiritual body. As I was frequently told while growing up, if we don't have a heart, we don't have anything. As well, my client work reinforces my perception of the heart organ as anahata's organ. In fact, countless clients have experienced physical "heart conditions" when issues of love were paramount in their lives. I remember one client with angina, a constriction in the heart muscle. He had grown up with parents who seldom provided a smile, much less a

hug. Every time he thought about taking in or giving out signs of love to others, his angina would strike. In our work together I helped him embrace the fact that he deserved to give and receive love; his heart energy shifted, and his angina cleared up.

This isn't to say that the thymus isn't important; I relate it to the eighth chakra in my own twelve-chakra system, described in chapter 32. Located above the head, this chakra operates through the thymus to link us with all places, abilities, and dimensions that are mystical in nature. In the end, I believe we must each select which of the two organs makes sense to us as the center of our being.

EXERCISE: **Mantra to Create Peace Instead of Fear**

The heart is particularly responsive to fear. In reacting to fear, our heartbeat shifts and we get stuck in negative thinking. It's easy to worry about the future and become entrenched in the mistakes of the past.

The following mantra can be particularly helpful in releasing fear and establishing a sense of peace. You can repeat it aloud or silently, as often as needed.

Om shante shante sarvarishta nashini swaha. [14]

Based on my own review of these words and their meanings, one could interpret these ancient, mystical, and multileveled words this way:

O Sacred One, toward peace, toward peace. You are the means of accomplishing the removal of sufferings. This is the prayer we offer.

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

The predominant sense associated with anahata is the sense of touch, and the sense organ is the skin.

Action Organ

The action organ is the sexual organ.

Vital Breath

The vital breath is prana.

Related Diseases

Illnesses related to anahata include diseases of the heart, lungs, breasts, pericardium, and ribs, including heart disease, asthma, cancers, and pneumonia; thoracic spinal issues; and issues with the thymus, upper back, and shoulders.[15]

Psychological Functions

Ideally, the heart is the center of all positive emotions or virtues, such as appreciation and compassion. Considered the center of love in most religions and spiritual disciplines, it regulates our relationships—with self, others, and the Divine. Within this center we learn to balance our own emotional and relationship needs with those of others, seeking to be generous but also self-caring, nurturing but also ethical, individual yet communal.

Anahata is also associated with our ability to escape the limitations of karma and make decisions honoring—while transcending—the bindings of the past. To "follow our heart" is to perceive and create choices from a higher place, rather than from our lower chakra nature, which is based on desires and compulsions.

Within our heart we learn to balance opposites—male and female, mind and body, ego and unity. We therefore confront what opposes unconditional love, such as jealousy, envy, and hatred. Along the way, we eventually learn to embrace and embody our true spiritual identity.[16]

Associated Archetypes

The positive archetype connected with anahata is the Lover. According to Jung, this archetype rules emotion, feeling, idealism, and sensuality. It infuses joy into the mysterious forces of the everyday.[17]

On the negative side, we find the Actor, who needs to exaggerate the drama of life by telling false stories and seeking attention through traumatic experiences. The Actor aspect of anahata can learn how to use a passion for telling tales to share wisdom and insight through myth, legend, and story.[18]

Personality Profile

Is there a relationship in the house? The heart-based person gravitates to couples and within minutes can tell what's working and what's not between them. If you are fourth chakra centered, love and happiness are core values, as is the tendency to want to fix other people's relationship problems. This focus can potentially thrust you into the world of healing and acts of serving others. Your spiritual purpose will often involve helping others relationally or through healing endeavors.

Deficiencies and Excesses of the Fourth Chakra

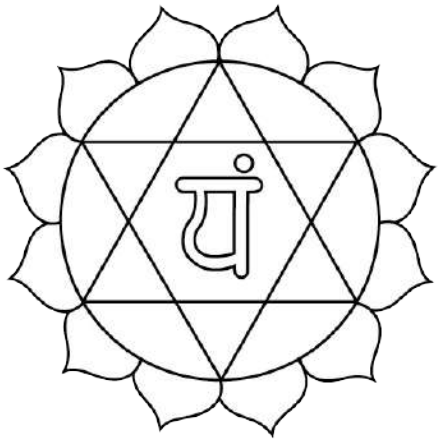
Deficiencies in the anahata energy center include the inability to forgive, loneliness, lack of empathy, lack of self-love, apathy, indifference, and withdrawing or becoming aimless.

Excesses in this center lead to jealousy, codependency, martyrdom, self-aggrandizement, egotism, self-centeredness, and tribalism.

When the Fourth Chakra Is Balanced

Anahata in balance creates a sense of wholeness and a host of love-centered abilities including empathy, compassion, friendliness, motivation, nurture, and acceptance.[19]

Anahata Symbols: The Fourth Chakra Yantra



In this yantra, or chakra symbol, the smoke-gray lotus flower with twelve petals contains a *shaktona*, a symbol of the unification of the masculine and

feminine, formed by overlapping, intersecting triangles; the final result is a hexagram. The triangle facing upward symbolizes Shiva; the one pointing downward, Shakti. Even more specifically, this hexagram represents Purusha, the supreme being, and Prakriti, the mother of matter. The deity of this region is Vayu, who is smoke colored and four armed. He holds an *angkusha,* or goad (a stick used to herd animals), and rides an antelope, the sound carrier of this chakra.

Also within this chakra is the seed syllable *yam*, which is dark gray. Within the *bindu,* or dot above the syllable, is the deity Ishana, who is described under the following section "Ruling God." Also present is the form of Shakti associated with Ishana, Kakini, who is depicted in the following section "Ruling Goddess." Linked to this chakra is the *bhana lingam*, described in the following "Granthi (Knot)" section.[20]

Anahata's Component Parts

These are the major components of the anahata:

Gross Element: Air

Subtle Element: Impact/touch

Color of the Element: Colorless, gray, or tepid green

Sound of the Element: Yam

Attribute: Patience and restlessness [21]

Sound Carrier: The black antelope or gazelle symbolizes the lightness of physical substance. In its swiftness it represents the air element and the essence of Purusha, discussed in the previous "Anahata Symbols" section. The antelope is shy and graceful, implying a spirituality that cannot be grasped by an ego-centered self.[22]

Petals: There are twelve petals, vermillion in color, upon which are inscribed the syllables kam, kham, gam, gham, ngam, cham, chham, jam, jham, nyam, ttam, and ttham. They match the *vrittis* of lust, fraud, indecision, repentance, hope, anxiety, longing, impartiality, arrogance, incompetence, discrimination, and defiance. Vrittis are "turnings of the

mind"—thoughts that affect us positively or negatively. The letters on the petals (and sounds of each nadi) look like this: ठं कं खं गं घं ङं चं छं जं झं ञं टं [23]

Cosmic Realm or Plane

Anahata relates to the *mahar loka* realm, the place of balance and home of the siddhi and saints.

Ruling Goddess

Here is the Kakini Shakti, with rose-colored skin and a sky blue sari, seated upon a pink lotus. She holds a sword, shield, skull, and trident.

Ruling God

The related deity is Ishana Rudra Shiva, sometimes called Isvara. Peaceful and benevolent, he has camphor-blue skin and holds a trident in his right hand and a drum in his left. His flowing hair is symbolic of the Ganges River, a stream of self-knowledge that pronounces "I Am That." The snakes coiled around his body represent the passions, which he has tamed.[24]

Ruling Planet

Venus rules the anahata chakra, blessing the chakra with energies of love, pleasure, and beauty.

Granthi (Knot)

Here we find the second *granthi,* or kundalini lock, which must be unwound: the Vishnu granthi. It is associated with the *uddiyana bandha,* or abdominal valve, in the body and is most frequently linked with the heart chakra, although it is sometimes perceived as being between manipura and anahata. Vishnu is the god of preservation, and he asks us to untie this knot in order to open *karuna,* or compassion. In doing so we accept the responsibility of serving others with devotion and love while releasing the desire to focus on our self-identity.[25]

This granthi is related to the bhana lingam, around which the kundalini is wound three and a half times. The bindu of the anahata chakra coincides with the tip of this lingam, which isn't itself pierced by the sushumna but,

according to Woodroffe, has an empty space within its circle.[26] This lingam is associated with its own form of Rudra Shiva or Sadashiva, meaning "eternal benefactor." He is also known as the Shabda Brahma or the eternal logos ("word"). As such, this Brahma is also called Omkara, the combination of the three *gunas* of sattva, ragas, and tamas, which are symbolized by the trident he holds. The gunas are the subtle qualities of nature, or *prakriti*. These three gunas are represented by the universal *aum* (or *om*). The bhana lingam is the symbol of the subtle work through which we perceive the universal life principle. It is often seen as red or gold in color.[27]

Intuitive Abilities

Siddhi

The anahata *siddhi*, or extraordinary powers, activate upon achieving full control of the element of air. They include the *bhuchari siddhi* (ability to travel anywhere); *khechari siddhi* (flight through the sky); and the *kaya siddhi* (transcending old age, disease, and death).[28]

The Shiva Samhita adds the following to this list: immeasurable knowledge; knowledge of the past, present, and future; and clairaudience and clairvoyance. As well, the anahata adept is able to perceive yoginis, adepts, and goddesses and perform techniques including fire walking and leading others into a hypnotic trance.[29] Besides this, the anahata yogi can discover cures for various illnesses, understands physiological matters, can create and destroy the obvious, and can make gold and find hidden treasures.[30] In addition, the flowering of the heart activates additional higher gifts, including the ability to hear speech from a distance, assume other forms, enter another's body (whether they are alive or dead), die at will, participate in the sports of the gods in heaven, and experience no obstruction to one's command.[31]

Contemporary Gifts

These can include the following: apantomancy (the interpretation of chance meetings with animals), astral projection (out-of-body travel), chiromancy or palmistry, clairempathy (sensing others' emotions), energetic healing, faith

healing, hypnosis, and megagnomy (the use of psychic ability while in a hypnotic state).

Subtle Body Partners

Related Auric Field And Its Functions

The fourth auric layer is located atop the third auric field, about one foot to a foot and a half away from the body, and is featured in chapters 20 and 32.

Secondary Chakras

The best-known secondary heart chakra is the hrit chakra, located just below the heart, near the solar plexus, just to the left-hand side of the body. It is often considered the spiritual heart, in contrast with the body's physical heart.

Hrit has its own lotus, called the *anandakanda*, which means "root or bulb of bliss." It has eight petals, each of which represents an emotion: dullness, anger, evil, joy, movement, sexuality, charity, and holiness. These petals, which are gold, white, or red, also represent eight superpowers. *Hrit* means "heart," and this chakra is located in the *chitrini nadi* within the vertebral column. It is depicted as stain free—a subtle center that is untouched by the world's impurities. The chakra faces downward and could actually be considered as composing the lower part of anahata.

This chakra is also called the *hridaya* chakra, meaning "he who dwells in the heart," as well as the anandakanda chakra: the point where energy and matter meet and emanate the aroma of bliss. Golden in color, it may be called the *surya,* or sun, chakra; if so, it is linked to manipura chakra. The argument for this belief is that this chakra provides heat to the third chakra.

There are three regions in the hrit. First is a vermillion sun region, within which is a white moon. Inside the moon is a deep-red fire region and inside of this is a red wish-granting tree known as the kalpataru. This enchanting tree represents our ability to manifest our deepest soul's desires.

The kalpataru is often called the celestial wishing tree. Depicted with a jeweled altar in front of it, this tree was given us from the Heaven of Indra and is red like the dawn. The eight petals play a role in the tree's

enchantment; whether they are gold or white, we wish upon the petals. It is said that this tree bestows even more upon the adept than he desires.[32]

In Tibetan Buddhism, anahata is also affiliated with the red and white drop, or "fire wheel," that carries our consciousness to our next lives. It functions as its own chakra and is depicted as white and circular with eight downward-pointing petals. Its seed syllable is *hum*. In the tantric Tibetan tradition, this chakra is located between the heart and the throat chakras. More information about these concepts appears in chapter 24, and the chakra is depicted in Illustration 12.[33]

ILLUSTRATION 12—THE CELESTIAL TREE WISHING CHAKRA: Within the hrit chakra is the kalpataru, or celestial tree for wishing. Through it, the Divine can grant our soul's deepest desires. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

EXERCISE: **Wishing Upon the Celestial Tree**

Would you like to wish upon kalpataru, the celestial wishing tree, the anandakanda lotus found within the hrit chakra? Located at the bottom of anahata, this enchanting tree responds to our most earnest wishes—not what we *think* we want but what our soul yearns for. When we wish with all sincerity upon this tree, the kalpataru grants even more than we ask for; it provides us *moksha*, or freedom.

The following meditation, based on a meditation offered on indianetzone.com, will help you connect with this tree. My rendering is

as follows:

Lie down in a comfortable position, breathe deeply, and relax. Become aware of your heartbeat and follow the pumping of your blood throughout your body. As you flow through the network of blood vessels, from arteries to veins to capillaries, note how similar this system is to the branching of a tree and how your legs are comparable to roots in the ground.

Now focus on another tree that lies near your heart chakra, under the ribs and to the left side of your body. Held within your hrit chakra, this miniature tree of life is your kalpataru, a gift planted within you by Indra, who brought the kalpataru to life.

In front of this tree is a bejeweled altar. Kneeling before it, make your commitment to higher good and to living a life of service. This is what our heart asks of us, and it is the key to opening the magical powers of the kalpataru.

When you're ready, concentrate on the deepest yearnings of your soul. What is the truth of your inner being; what stars have been sown within you, longing to be born? Feel your hunger for these things and the desire for them pulsing through your body. Now send this pulsation along with your request for these boons to the kalpataru as you might direct a song, a prayer, or a need toward a holy and loving parent.

As your deepest cravings drench the wishing tree like a summer rain, picture a single bird flying from afar and landing on the tree. It tilts its head and listens to your hopes, drawing them into itself. When it has determined that you are ready to surrender your desires and allow God to determine the form of its delivery, the bird gently kisses you with its beak and flies away. It will carry your wishes to Indra, who will honor your requests.

After the bird sails off, feel gratitude in your heart for the gift of this tree, which has always been within you, awaiting your wishes. Thank Indra and the bird, breathe deeply, and return to your conscious state.

Now you can wait with an open heart for the wishes of your heart to manifest.

In the depths of this green chakra lies our ability to love and dream our soul's dreams. Linked with the cardiac plexus, this chakra is associated with the heart, an endocrine gland in its own right, or sometimes the thymus, as well as related bodily areas. Activated after the third chakra, it is associated with the sense of touch and the sense organ of the skin, also channeling the prana breath. It is also home to the higher realm of mahar loka and seeks to help us deal with the attribute of restlessness.

Symbolized by a smoky gray lotus with twelve petals set off by intersecting triangles, this chakra is enforced by the Lover archetype and detracted from by the Actor archetype. Running with the element of air, this chakra relates to the external world through touch. The black antelope or gazelle carries its beautiful sound, which is *yam*, and the goddess Kakini Shakti, along with the god Ishana Rudra Shiva, associated with the planet Venus. The fourth auric field is linked to this chakra, as is the second granthi. Upon transformation by kundalini, dozens of spiritual gifts become available, many linked to the powers of the air and healing.

As we journey upward with kundalini, we next enter the abode of the fifth chakra, or vishuddha. We are now ready to give voice to our convictions and inner self.

[contents]

The Fifth Hindu Chakra

VISHUDDHA

YOU CAN CHANGE your world by changing
your words…Remember, death and life
are in the power of the tongue.

JOEL OSTEEN

Vishuddha, the fifth Hindu chakra, is best introduced with a story.

According to Indian mythology, the battle between good and evil has always taken place between *devas* (gods) and *rakshasas* (demons). During one such skirmish, Vishnu attempted to resolve the fight by roiling and churning the ocean, which represents the world and the mind. What emerged from the swirling waters was the nectar of immortality—and poison.

The devas received the nectar, but no one wanted the harmful poison, so Shiva drank it, thereby neutralizing the danger. The venom lodged in his throat, thus assuring him the name Nilakantha, or "blue-throated one." Because of Shiva's selfless gift, when we activate our higher levels of awareness at the vishuddha chakra, also known as the throat chakra, we neutralize the toxic elements of life.[1]

Here in the fifth chakra, the nectar called *amrita* drips down from the bindu chakra (located in the fontanel area of the head) as we learn to be more discriminating, creative, and self-expressive. In this center, negative experiences are transformed into wisdom as we heal our ultimate blockage—guilt. Sound becomes a vehicle for communication, and we find ourselves able to hear and listen from a higher place. Slowly, we become the embodiment of what vishuddha represents: pure communication.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning

The Sanskrit word *vishuddha* means "purification."[2]

Other Names

Tantric names include akasha, dwyashtapatrambuja, kantha, kanthadesha, kanthambhoja, kanthambuja, kanthapadma, kanthapankaja, nirmala-padma, shodasha, shodasha-dala, shodasha-patra, shodashara, and shodashollasa-dala. Late Upanishads and Puranic scripture include kantha chakra.[3]

Location

The vishuddha chakra is aligned along the sushumna nadi, at the base of the throat, and is associated with the laryngeal plexus and the carotid plexus. Its *kshetram,* or activation point, is in the middle of the throat.[4]

Purpose

Vishuddha is the seat of communication and expression.

Color

Vishuddha is usually seen as sky blue and sometimes as bright turquoise.

Chakra Activation

In Anodea Judith's system, activation takes place from the ages of eight to twelve. In my system, activation starts and concludes earlier: from ages six and a half to eight and a half. The Hindu system places activation between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-five, during which time we are motivated by the expression of divine wisdom and higher knowledge.[5]

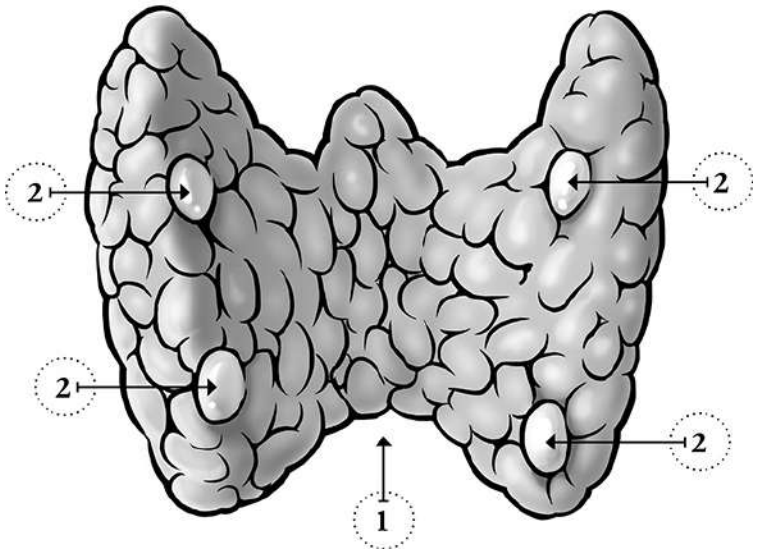


ILLUSTRATION 13—THE THYROID AND PARATHYROID: The thyroid (1) is the endocrine gland for the fifth chakra; the parathyroid glands (2) play a supportive role.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Associated Gland

The fifth chakra's gland is the thyroid. The thyroid and its associated glands, the parathyroid, can be seen in Illustration 8 and Illustration 13.

The Thyroid: Vishuddha's Endocrine Gland and Its Accompaniment, the Parathyroid

The thyroid, the main endocrine gland of the fifth chakra, is a butterfly-shaped organ located in the lower neck just below the Adam's apple and along the front of the trachea. It has two side lobes that are bridged in the middle, as can be seen in Illustration 13.

The thyroid is rich in blood vessels and nerves and secretes important bodily hormones. The main thyroid hormone is thyroxine, or T4. Along with the other thyroid hormones, T4 influences metabolism, growth and development, and body

temperature. Thyroid problems are widespread and include hypo- and hyperthyroidism, Graves' disease, digestive and weight problems, and exhaustion.[6]

In my work I have found that the health of our thyroid gland is highly dependent on our ability to express appropriately through our fifth chakra. It is also dependent on our ability to regulate access on the part of external entities through the back side of this chakra; this is the entry point for celestial guidance, as I describe in the section about the twelve-chakra system in chapter 34. As well, quite specific thyroid dysfunctions can have specific meanings from a chakra viewpoint. For instance, I find that many women are diagnosed with a normal thyroid even though they have obvious thyroid-related symptoms because doctors only test T4, one of the specific thyroid hormones, instead of the conversion of T4 to T3. Thyroxine, or T4, is a thyroid hormone converted from iodine. T3 is is also made from iodine and is short for triiodothyronine. The thyroid cells combine the iodine with the amino acid tyrosine to make T4 and T3. T3 is considered the active thyroid hormone, and T4 is further broken down and of little use on its own. If the T4 isn't converted to T3, the body's metabolic rate is negatively affected. This conversion often doesn't occur if the basic minerals it requires are unavailable (magnesium, calcium, iodine, and others) or when the client's stress level is roof-high—and not just any stress. I typically find this problem occurs with individuals who spend most of their energy caring for others, not for themselves. When we don't speak up for ourselves, we can develop what I've come to call "T3 caretaker silence."

The four parathyroid glands are also associated with the fifth chakra, although they are secondary in importance. Although these glands are located next to the thyroid, and their names would suggest otherwise, the thyroid and parathyroid do not

biologically interrelate. These four glands make a parathyroid hormone that controls the level of calcium in our blood and bones. Calcium determines the production of electric currents along our nerves, enabling our nerves to talk with each other.[7] Since the movement of kundalini energy is an electrical and biochemical process, we can see that this gland plays an important role in enabling a kundalini rising. (For more on the biology of kundalini, see chapter 22.)

Body Parts Managed

The fifth chakra manages the neck, ears, jaws, teeth, mouth, trachea, vocal cords, thyroid gland, parathyroid glands, cervical vertebrae, esophagus, and upper shoulders.

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

The main sense is hearing, and the ears are the sense organ.

Action Organ

The mouth is vishuddha's action organ.

Vital Breath

The vital breath in this energy center is udana.

Related Diseases

Health conditions related to vishuddha including asthma, bronchitis, mouth ulcers, thyroid dysfunctions, sore throat, laryngitis, ear infections, hearing issues, mouth problems, teeth and gum issues, tinnitus, tonsillitis, neck issues, upper arm pain, laryngitis, hay fever, and temporomandibular joint disorders (TMJ).[8]

Psychological Functions

Within this energy center we deal with the psychological issues of faith, decision making, personal expression, and creativity, and those things we choose to voice or not, as well as how we choose to share what we express. This is our communication center, through which we learn to state our truth

with honesty yet kindness. Lies and falsehoods can pollute this center and lead to repressed anger, evasiveness, or silence.

The beliefs affecting this chakra's functioning include thinking we can never get what we want or that we are not supposed to speak up for ourselves. Lack of self-knowledge can lead to mouthing falsities or gossiping, emotional congestion, and criticism of self and others. One of the key challenges here is facing our past behavior, or karma, and forgiving ourselves by releasing guilt so we can move forward in a better way.

When we embrace the lessons of this chakra, the mind can stop causing problems. Supreme reasoning from above overcomes the negative emotions of the heart below. If we can expand beyond negative intellectualism (the wrong use of knowledge), we can access all five planes of *jnana,* or awareness, and balance all our pranas. We can now receive divine guidance and become *chitta*: free from the fetters of the world. Paradoxically, we also begin to care about humanity as a whole, often feeling compelled to alleviate the suffering of others.[9]

Associated Archetypes

Vishuddha's positive archetype is the Communicator. Jung writes that this archetype uses all forms of communication to gather and disperse information.[10]

On the negative side, the archetype is the Silent Child. This archetype resists the communication of truth, signified by the stifling and suppression of emotions and needs. The positive side of the Silent Child is revealed in the knowledge of when to speak—or keep quiet.[11]

Personality Profile

A fifth chakra person is all about communication. Music, reading, speaking —anything goes as long as you get the message across verbally.

As the communicator of the chakra system, you are often opinionated and expressive as well as a good listener, and you learn by speaking aloud. Your spiritual destiny will inevitably involve communication, either through the

so-called normal channels of talking, speaking, or making music or by conveying mystical or spiritual messages that are passed to and through you.

I can't even count how many clients who are strong in the fifth chakra end up being solid communicators, often making their living with their gift. One of my clients is a famous author, and one of the more prolific in his genre. He says he never stopped talking when growing up, always wears blue, and, if afflicted with a problem, it occurs in his throat. (No wonder: he uses it all the time—he even thinks aloud.) Of course, you can be an introverted communicator as well. I am actually quite shy, but I am a good teacher; when I'm speaking, I'm able to open the back side of my throat chakra (which accesses guidance) to glean information.

Even animals can have stronger and weaker chakras (animal chakras are explored in chapter 33). I have a young dog who started his relationship with us barking from the bowels of a crate he was delivered in from another state. He's never stopped "talking." Even while he was undergoing three hours of surgery, the veterinarian told me that he barked the entire time. As you might imagine, the surgery was on his mouth.

Deficiencies and Excesses of the Fifth Chakra

Deficiencies in this energy center lead to throat maladies, underactive thyroid, grinding teeth, fear of speaking, and the inability to express one's truth. We can also become too precise or overregulated.

Excesses lead to talking too much, gossiping, stuttering, loudness, an overactive thyroid, lack of consideration, and fragmentation. Excesses can also open the door to compulsive behaviors, including overeating.

When the Fifth Chakra Is Balanced

A person with a balanced fifth chakra is creative and expressive, communicates positively, listens consciously, and experiences a sense of contentment.[12]

Vishuddha Symbols: The Fifth Chakra Yantra

The vishuddha yantra, or representative symbol, is a silver crescent within a white circle that shines like the full moon (many perceive the crescent on the tail of the symbol in the center). This white moon sits within a sky blue downward-pointing triangle. Surrounding the moon are sixteen petals. This silver crescent is the lunar symbol of nada, the purest cosmic sound, and represents the purification provided to the yogi whose energy ascends through the chakras.

The white, ethereal region of this chakra also features the elephant described in the following "Sound Carrier" section and is represented by the bija that sits atop the elephant. The god Ambhara rules the bija *ham*. Seated on his elephant, Ambhara is white, has four arms, holds a noose and a goad, grants boons, and dispels fear. In his lap are the deities described in the following "Ruling Gods" and "Ruling Goddess" sections.

Within this chakra, the nectar amrita drips downward through the chitrini nadi and is divided into a pure form and a poison. Practices such as the khechari mudra, featured in following "The Khechari Mudra" exercise, and the unlocking of the jalandhara bandha allow this nectar to reach the vishuddha in a purified form, cleansing the body of the poison. Within the storyline of this yantra, the moon image represents psychic energy, clairvoyance, and the ability to communicate without words. As these abilities activate, supported by the inner Shakti, who provides siddhi powers, all the elements of the lower chakras—earth, water, fire, and air—are refined and dissolve into ether or akasha.[13]

Vishuddha's Component Parts

Gross Element: Ether, also known as akasha, which combines the essence of all five elements but is without color, smell, taste, touch, or form

Subtle Element: Vibration/sound

Color of the Element: Smoky purple

Sound of the Element: Ham

Attribute: Unity and ego [14]

Sound Carrier: The elephant Airavata is the lord of the herbivorous animals and the traveling vehicle for Indra. It is sometimes considered smoky gray, the color of the clouds, but is more frequently depicted as white, which represents purity. In contrast to the elephant of muladhara, Airavata is unrestricted. Moving freely on the etheric planes, he is open to the rays of the cosmos. His single trunk emanates the pure sound of *ng*. This is a nasal sound and moves energy to the outermost brain cortex, which stores our life impressions. With this sound, these impressions can now be converted to wisdom and knowledge, enabling pure freedom from the reincarnation cycle.[15]

Petals: There are sixteen petals arranged from right to left. They are often considered smoke colored or sometimes smoky purple and showcase sixteen letters that are deep red, red, or golden. They are written like this: am, aam, im, lim, um, uum, rm, rrm, lm, llm, em, alm, om, aum, aam, and ahm. The *vrittis* are pranava (representing the mantra *aum*), udgitha (the *sama* mantras), the *hung* mantra, *phat* mantra, *washat* mantra, *swadha* mantra, *swaha* mantra, *namak* mantra, and the *amfita*, which is nectar, and the seven musical tones of viznishada, riskabha, gandhara, shadja, madhyama, dhaiwata, and panchama. Here is how the letters appear in Sanskrit: अं अं आं इं ईं उं ऊं ऋं ॠं ऌं ॡं सं सें अीं औं आं [16]

EXERCISE: **Resonating the Bija *Ham***

Ham is the bija mantra of vishuddha, sounded as *hang*. You can make this sound by forming an oval shape with your lips and pushing the air outward from your throat while concentrating on the hollow curve of your lower neck. You will hear sweet and melodious sounds.[17]

Cosmic Realm or Plane

The plane of vishuddha is the human plane: *jana loka*, the ending of darkness.

Ruling Goddess

Here we find Shakini, who is either shining white or yellow. She is five-faced, three-eyed, and four-armed. She holds several objects, differing by the depiction but usually including a noose, goad, book, bow and arrow, and trident. She is seated on a red lotus. Shakini helps bestow higher knowledge and all the siddhi, as well as mastery of the five elements and psychic communication.

Ruling Gods

Above the bindu, the point above the mantra, is Sadashiva as Ardhanarishvara. In this form, the right side of his body, his Shiva aspect, is white, while the left or Shakti side is golden. Ardhanarishvara is androgynous and encourages us to blend our masculine and feminine aspects of self. He is five-faced, three-eyed, and ten-armed, and he holds a trident, a chisel or ax, a sword, the *vajra* or thunderbolt, fire, a snake, a bell, a goad, and a noose. He makes the gesture for dispelling fear.[18]

There is an alternative god in the vishuddha yantra: Panchavaktra Shiva. He has camphor-blue skin and five heads, representing the spectrum of smell, taste, sight, touch, and sound, all representing the lower chakra elements in their most perfect form. His faces symbolize five aspects of Shiva: Aghora, Ishana, Mahadeva, Sadashiva, and Rudra. Panchavaktra Shiva continually manifests the sound *aum*.[19]

EXERCISE: **The Khechari Mudra: Opening to the Nectar of the Gods**

Khechari mudra is well known for opening the energy body to the nectar that passes downward into vishuddha chakra. It also enables a link with the chakra located in the soft palate of the mouth. Known as the tongue-swallowing or tongue-lock technique, khechari mudra involves turning the tongue upward and sliding it into the nasal cavity above the soft palate.

There are many benefits to performing khechari mudra. This technique stimulates a number of pressure points at the back of the mouth and in the nasal cavity, in turn activating several glands and increasing the secretion of helpful hormones and saliva. (In fact, there are eighty-four meridian points on the roof of the mouth.) It can reduce hunger and thirst and increase inner calm and serenity. The word itself means "sky" and "one who moves," indicating that the technique helps move nectar from the posterior fontanel (the bindu in the seventh chakra) downward.

Physically, this technique delivers pressure in the throat region and the two carotid sinuses, which are situated at each side of the main artery supplying the brain with blood, in front of the neck and just below jaw level. These two organs help regulate blood flow and pressure. Sensing a fall in blood pressure, they send a message to the brain, which quickens the heartbeat and contracts certain blood vessels, raising blood pressure to normal. The carotid sinuses also detect high blood pressure and tell the brain to lower it. Working with this area can help you decrease stress and rejuvenate your body.

It is also interesting that modern science has discovered that parts of the pituitary and pineal glands are formed in the embryo from cells located in the roof palate of the mouth; thus we see biology and chakraology intersecting.

If you want to practice the steps involved in this mudra, they are as follows:

- Roll your tongue upward and backward, so the lower surface lies in contact with your upper palate. Stretch as far back as possible without straining.
- Breathing inward, produce a snoring sound from the back of your throat and then exhale.
- Swallow any saliva that collects in your mouth. If you feel uncomfortable, release your tongue for a second and reconnect. You can work up to performing this technique for five to ten minutes at a time while reducing your breaths to five or six per minute. A bitter taste indicates that poisons are being secreted and you should abstain from this practice at that time.[20]

Ruling Planet

Mercury, the planet of mental activity and learning, rules the fifth chakra.

Granthi (Knot)

There is no granthi associated with the fifth chakra.

Intuitive Abilities

Siddhi

The Hindu term referring to mastering the qualities, or *tattvas*, of this chakra is *akashi-dharan*a. At this level, a yogi holds knowledge of the four Vedas and will not perish, even if the whole universe does. He or she also becomes *trikala-jnani*: knowledgeable about the past, present, and future.

Others of the numerous *siddhis,* or supernatural powers, associated with vishuddha include clairaudience, freedom from hunger and thirst, *laghima* (levitation), superhearing, the ability to travel through space, and mastery of the elements and the five bodily senses. With the activation of this chakra, the yogi increases in knowledge as well as the power of eloquence and the ability to persuade others, such as through hypnosis.[21]

Contemporary Gifts

These can include the following: afterlife communication (communicating with the deceased), automatic writing (writing a message in a trance state),

bibliomancy (interpreting passages from a book), channeling (delivering a message through one's body), clairaudience (hearing psychic messages), exorcism (freeing one of spirits), hypnosis, mediumship (being a conduit for a spirit), megagnomy (using psychic senses in a hypnotic state), telepathy (hearing another's thoughts), xenoglossy (the ability to speak a language you don't know), and, in conjunction with other chakras, clairgustance (clear tasting) and transfiguration (superimposing a face on a medium).

Subtle Body Partners

Related Auric Field And Its Functions

The fifth auric layer is located atop the fourth auric field, about two feet above the body's surface, and is featured in chapters 20 and 32.

Secondary Chakras

There are several "secret chakras" linked to the higher chakras, and many of these link to vishuddha. The lalana (also called the talu or talana) lies at the base of the nasal orifice, just above the throat. As well, the bindu visarga is at the top of the brain, toward the back of the head. This is the spot where Hindu monks often retain a tuft of hair. With the vishuddha chakra, these two chakras form a triangle.

Sahasrara emits and drops the nectar that collects in the bindu visarga; this chakric name means "falling of drops." Mentioned several times in this chapter, this nectar is so powerful that it has been used to help yogis survive for forty days while buried.[22] If vishuddha has not been activated, the nectar is said to drop down to manipura and cause degeneration.[23]

Lalana, which means both "female energy" and "tongue," is also called the talu chakra because it is situated at the talu, or base, of the palate, behind the uvula. It is considered a secret chakra because meditation upon it must be learned from a guru. Many ancient tantric texts also suggest that kundalini passes through the lalana on the way to ajña.

The description of lalana differs from one text to another. According to the Saubhagya Lakshmi Upanishad, it has twelve bright red petals. Other texts suggest that it has sixty-four silvery white petals and a bright red pericarp

called the *ghantika*, within which is an area of moon energy called *chandra kala*. It is from this source that the nectar is said to ooze.

The sixty-four petals of lalana are also said to house sixty-four powerful yoginis. These yoginis can serve as our magical teachers; by learning from and practicing with them, we can develop eight distinct siddhis.[24]

Lalana is also associated with twelve nadis, which enable a yogi to gain all knowledge. The Sanskrit letters linked to these nadis are ha, sa, ksha, ma, la, va, ra, ya, ha, sa, kha, and phrem.[25]

Lalana, which is also sometimes called talana, is sometimes placed above ajña, although lalata, another secret chakra discussed in chapter 10 (sahasrara), is most frequently placed above ajña.

Lower than lalana is the golata chakra. While lalana is placed inside the soft upper palate, golata is found on the uvula at the back of the throat.[26] All together, these chakras are often called the "Mouth of God." You can see the lalana chakra in Illustration 14.[27]

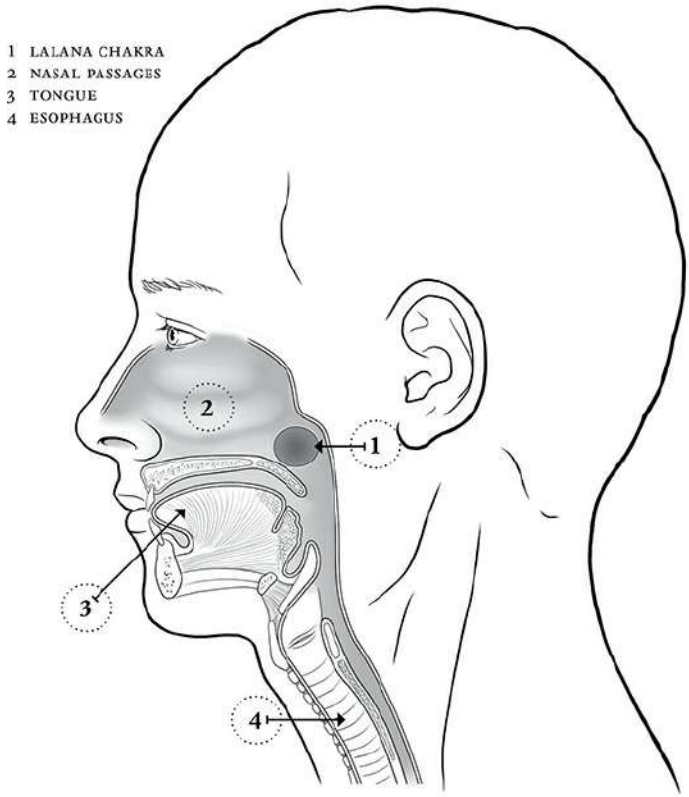


ILLUSTRATION 14—THE LALANA CHAKRA: The lalana chakra is a secondary chakra to the vishuddha (fifth) chakra and is basically in the center of many fifth and sixth chakra anatomical centers. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Sky blue, the fifth chakra pulses with the ether or akasha element, which manifests as vibration or sound. This element is a smoky purple and holds the energy of unity. And isn't that the ultimate task of our fifth chakra? Here we give voice to our thoughts and respond to others' communication, forging the bonds of union.

Vishuddha is linked with the laryngeal and carotid plexuses, as well as the thyroid endocrine gland. Activated after anahata in adulthood, according to Hindu philosophy, it is associated with the ears and hearing, its action organ being the mouth. The vital breath is udana, and the archetypes are the Communicator and the Silent Child.

This beautiful and expressive chakra is symbolized by a silver crescent in a white circle with sixteen petals and an inverted triangle within the circle; it makes the sound *ham*, which is carried by an elephant. Associated with the cosmic plane of *jana loka*, the ending of darkness, it is ruled by the goddess Shakini, the god Sahahsiva in the form of Ardhanarishvara, and the planet Mercury. It aligns with the fifth auric field and, upon full activation, makes dozens of spiritual gifts (*siddhis*) available to us; many of these gifts relate to knowledge and expression.

Once we have passed through our fifth chakra on our travels with kundalini, our guiding serpent passes us into ajña, the sixth chakra.

[contents]

The Sixth Hindu Chakra

AJÑA

IT IS A terrible thing to see
and have no vision.

HELEN KELLER

Ajña, or the sixth chakra, is associated with the mind as well as with vision, both sensory sight and inner and psychic sight. Within this chakra we transform our individual consciousness and transcend duality.

There are a number of threes associated with this chakra. Here the solar and lunar nadis, the pingala and ida specifically, blend with the central channel of the sushumna, initiating a transcended consciousness. The three *gunas,* or qualities emphasized in ayurvedic medicine—sattva, rajas, and tamas—join in a chorus to form the divine *aum*, the most sacred of sounds. As well, within the cauldron of ajña the three elements of consciousness are combined: *buddhi,* or higher mind; *ahamkara,* or ego; and *manas,* or the thinking mind. Along with several secondary chakras, ajña encourages the path of beauty and freedom from duality; when this chakra is active, we no longer see "good" versus "bad" or "I" versus "you."

This transformative process involves unknotting the third of three granthi. Once it is untied, we can perceive everything as sacred and whole. This is the place from which we can best live life—not only observing reality but truly perceiving it.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning

Ajña means "command" or "summoning," as well as "authority" and "unlimited power." This reflects the fact that it is from this energy center that all other chakras are guided.[1]

Other Names

Tantric names include ajita-patra, ajña-pura, ajña-puri, ajñamhuja, ajñapankaja, bhru-madhya, bhru-madhya-chakra, bhru-madhyaga-padma, bhru-mandala, bhru-mula, bhru-saroruha, dwidala, dwidala-Kamala, dwidalambuja, dwipatra, jnana-padma, netra-padma, netra-patra, shiva-padma, and triweni-kamala. In the Upanishads we find the names baindawa-sthana, bhru chakra, and bhruyugamadhyabila; the *Puranas* also use the name trirasna.[2]

The name *bhru madhya* consists of *bhru*, meaning "eyebrows," and *madhya*, "in between."[3] This chakra is also called the *trikuti*, or "third eye," referencing its power of clairvoyance.[4] Still more names are *divya chakshu,* or "divine eye," and *gyana chakshu* or *gyana netra*, "the eye of knowledge."[5] In modern circles it is referred to variously as the brow, forehead, third eye, or sixth chakra.

Location

Ajña sits at the very top of the spinal column, in the area of the medulla oblongata, the lower half of the brain stem. It is also linked to the medulla plexus, which is sometimes called the cavernous plexus, yet it's hard to find the exact location. Many focus on the ajña *kshetram,* or activation point, at the mid-eyebrow area.[6]

Purpose

Ajña is the seat of vision and perception.

Color

This chakra is commonly seen as violet or indigo.

Chakra Activation

In Anodea Judith's system, the sixth chakra is activated during adolescence. The twelve-chakra system begins earlier, at age eight and a half, and extends to fourteen years. In the Hindu system, if there is an association with a time period it is between the ages of thirty-five and forty-two, but most Hindu systems do not correlate a time period with the activation of ajña.

Associated Gland

The pituitary is the gland most frequently associated with the sixth chakra. Some experts also link it to the pineal gland, which I will describe in the next chapter. The location of the pituitary gland can be found in chapter 3's Illustration 8.

The Pituitary: Ajña's Endocrine Gland

The pituitary gland is a small endocrine organ about the size of a pea located in the middle of the brain. It is found inside a round, bony cavity separated from the sphenoid sinus by a thin bone that forms the roof of this sinus area, the most posterior part of the sinus. The drainage from the sphenoid descends almost directly down the opening into part of the nasal cavity. Thus the bodily placement of the pituitary gland supports the ancient Hindu belief that ajña receives a nectar that drips from above, a process we will explore throughout this chapter. The sphenoid sinus is also adjacent the optic nerve, the main nerve responsible for vision.[7] As we shall further explore in the next chapter, in the section "Partners in Perception: The Pineal and the Pituitary," the pituitary gland's link with the optic nerve enables it—in conjunction with the pineal gland—to fully activate the third eye functions often attributed to the sixth chakra.

Functionally, the pituitary is involved in the production of growth, sex, and other hormones that act upon the muscles, kidneys, and other endocrine glands. It also stores hormones produced by the hypothalamus. It is often called the "master gland" because it directs so many other organs and endocrine glands, including the adrenals, thyroid, and gonads.

There are two lobes composing the pituitary. The anterior lobe regulates growth, metabolism, and reproduction, and it accounts for about 80 percent of the pituitary gland's function. The posterior lobe produces vasopressin and oxytocin, two of the hormones linked to kundalini, as is explored in chapter 22. These hormones are released when the hypothalamus sends messages to the pituitary through nerve cells.

A stalklike structure connects the hypothalamus and the pituitary, emphasizing the interactive role between the two. The hypothalamus controls an immense number of bodily functions such as body temperature, hunger, aspects of parenting and attachment, thirst, sleep, and circadian cycles. In a biological sense, the posterior pituitary is like an extension of the hypothalamus, whereas the anterior functions as an independent organ. The nerves that enable this relationship are also involved in the control of emotions and sexual activity.[8]

Recently scientists have discovered another likely vital function of the hypothalamus: regulating many aspects of aging, either slowing down or quickening the aging process, mainly by responding to—or creating—inflammatory conditions. Inflammation has been linked to a plethora of health problems, including heart disease and diabetes, as well as the breakdown of the genes, which leads to disease and aging.[9]

Sometimes ajña, or the third eye, is associated with the parietal eye found in lizards. While the parietal eye is not as useful as our human eye, it does react to light. This type of eye was once found in turtles, crocodiles, and birds, but they have lost it through evolution. In lizards, the eye is initially a lined structure that holds the two symmetrical parts of the brain. As time goes on, the left side becomes the parietal eye and the right, a pineal sac. The parietal eye takes in light while the pineal sac emits melatonin, which regulates sleep cycles. We humans have a pineal gland

instead of a pineal sac.[10] The relationship between our pituitary and pineal glands is discussed in the next chapter.

I have found that the structure of the pituitary gland plays an essential role in self-image and manifesting, and in how these two factors tie together. From my perspective, the anterior pituitary gland receives our life choices, which stream in through the back side of the chakra. The posterior pituitary gland projects our decisions forward, which transform into the path that leads to our selected future. The empty space in the middle holds our self-image. We select our future from the choices presented us based on the image we hold of ourselves; hence, the enlightenment process is not only about how we see Spirit, but about how we embrace Spirit's view of us.

Body Parts Managed

These include the brain, eyes, pituitary gland, neurological system, sinuses, hypothalamus, aspects of the ears, the nose, and the pineal gland.

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

There is no predominant sense, so this chakra is neutral, and the sense organ is the mind.

Action Organ

The mind is also ajña's action organ.

Vital Breath

There is no vital breath associated with ajña but rather a harmonic convergence of all vital breaths.

History of the Third Eye: The Gift of Clairvoyance

We've probably all had clairvoyant experiences, heightened awareness of perception revealed pictorially or through "clear vision." Clairvoyance can manifest in many ways: seeing pictures, shapes, colors, or images in our mind's eye; when dreaming; using guided visualization; observing important visual omens or messages in our surrounding environment, such as deriving meaning from a visiting flock of crows or a license plate that carries a message; or envisioning what has occurred in the past, is happening elsewhere in the present, or might happen in the future.

We can assign any number of names to these experiences, including inner sight, "the sight," divining, second sight, retrocognition, precognition, scrying, prophecy, and more. We can call others who are gifted with clear seeing—including ourselves—oracles, seers, visionaries, psychics, or remote viewers, among other titles.

Universally, contemporary chakra aficionados relate clairvoyance with ajña. I do this myself, as my intuitive sessions are highly dependent on the use of my third eye. I begin nearly every session by perceiving a vision that applies to a client—not that I always understand what I see. Once I pictured broccoli when talking with a client over the phone. I didn't want to present this image, but it was the only one that would come, so I finally told her about it. The client laughed and told me that she ran a broccoli farm and was calling to ask whether there was something going on energetically that was keeping her from making it more profitable. But interestingly, neither Hinduism nor Buddhism characterized this chakra as a third eye until relatively recently. The chakras weren't originally described in association with auric fields, sounds, archetypes, or some of the other factors we will delve into later in this book such as flowers, gemstones, and homeopathic remedies. This fact does not

discredit the associations we have added over the centuries, however; rather, the different layers of associations people have discovered add to the complexity and application of chakra medicine.

Scientist Nils Holmgren first assigned the connotation of the third eye to ajña in 1918. Holmgren actually linked the sixth chakra with the pineal gland, discovering cells on the tip of the pineal glands of frogs and dogfish sharks that looked like retinal cone cells. Because of this, he concluded that the organ was a sort of spiritual third eye. His suggestion followed in the wake of similar beliefs on the part of members of the Victorian Theosophical Society and, earlier, of scientist René Descartes, all of whom agreed that the pineal gland played a vital role in spiritual awakening. C. W. Leadbeater's work furthered this concept, leading to the modern Western belief that ajña is a third eye.[11]

The use of the term *clairvoyance* is attributed to the Marquis de Puységur, a follower of Franz Anton Mesmer. In 1784 de Puységur treated a local peasant by the name of Victor Race. Race reportedly entered a trance state and articulated a diagnosis and prescription for his own disease, as well as those of others. (Centuries later, Edgar Cayce employed the same process and became one of the leading clairvoyants of all time.) De Puységur used the term clairvoyance to describe this process, although he didn't consider the behavior paranormal; rather, it was an aspect of mesmerism.[12]

However, hundreds if not thousands of cultures across time have deliberated upon the existence of clairvoyance and a bodily location for this gift. Ancient Egypt employed a symbol called the Eye of Horus, also named the Eye of Ra and the wedjat, since at least 3100 BCE. This eye is found on tomb and temple surfaces in the shape of a human eye, with the markings of a falcon. In the

Egyptian creation myth dating back to Old Kingdom pyramid texts, the male creator deity Ra (Atum-Ra) lost his two children to the sea and sent his eye, which is feminine, to search for them. When this eye returned she was sad to see that Ra had replaced her with a new eye, so she took the form of a serpent coiled upon Ra's forehead, and in this way she protects him.[13] In this legend we find echoes of kundalini and an emphasis on the brow as a psychic eye.

Famous also are the Greek oracles, or seers, associated with the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Prominent between 1400 BCE and AD 400, these female prophets entered a trance state and received clairvoyant visions predictive of the future.[14] Other temples to Apollo were located as far from Greece as Asia Minor.

In China, the use of oracle bones dates as far back as 1600 BCE. Oracles known as Akashwani or Ashareera van—a person without a body, who is unseen—were consulted in ancient India. They played a key role in events portrayed in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. In both ancient and present-day Tibet, spirits enter men and women to provide guidance. The Dalai Lama, in fact, consults a seer known as the Nechung Oracle. The Igbo people of Nigeria as well as the Yoruba people also employ oracles, as did the Aztecs in the pre-Columbian Americas. And in Hawaii, ancient kahunas placed round black stones in water and then gazed at the shining surfaces until images appeared.[15]

Renowned scholars Paracelsus and Rudolf Steiner, though separated by centuries, both believed that it is our birthright to perceive truth through psychic vision. Steiner's doctoral thesis, in fact, was that clairvoyance should be integrated into science if we hope to avoid a materialistic disaster. And throughout history, in every corner of the world, it has been said that spiritual beings fill the entirety of space. Living as we do in an ocean of spirits, we can only comprehend the true nature of reality—and all our

helpers—through our psychic attributes.[16] In the end, no matter the label we choose for clairvoyance or the chakras assigned to its beauty, we all have access to this way of perceiving and enjoying the truths of the universe.

Related Diseases

Health conditions include eyesight problems, deafness, nightmares, dyslexia, brain tumors, strokes, blindness, seizures, pain, depression, hormone imbalances, insomnia, neuralgia, acute sinusitis, dizziness, nervous breakdowns, growth or developmental disorders, blood pressure issues, learning disabilities, and, in conjunction with other chakras, migraines.[17]

Psychological Functions

With a developed ajña chakra, a yogi becomes a true seer—a "see-er" of the fact that we are all a manifestation of one spirit. This is not a state of perpetual rapture; rather, what is gained is the freedom to live simply within society. Reaching this awareness—and this lifestyle—is dependent on using our cognitive, intellectual, and mental abilities wisely.

We still have a way to go if we are experiencing the psychological challenges linked with ajña. These include intense irritation toward another person or an aspect of our life, as well as an inability to perceive what is truly occurring. Common invitations to deal with our ajña-based issues also include a refusal to change old patterns—despite the fact that we can plainly see they don't work—and the inability to look forward with joy. The underlying theme of ajña issues is basically a question of perception: is it time to start seeing life through the lens of our higher consciousness rather than our programmed inadequacies? To embrace the worth of our being—not our skill at "doing"—is the key to entering the resulting state of peacefulness.[18]

Associated Archetypes

The positive archetype of ajña is the Intuitive. Jung employed a psychological typing system in which an Intuitive—in contrast with a Sensor

—perceives reality through means beyond the senses, concentrating on future possibilities, the unconscious, and the energy surrounding one's experiences.

The Intellectual is the negative archetype here, appearing as cold, unfeeling, and manipulative. The Intellectual is a problem solver and quite analytical. Yet there are positive attributes of this archetype as well, including the ability to be logical and remain detached.[19]

Personality Profile

When it comes to long-term planning, the sixth chakra person is already there. Why look to the past when the future beckons? If you're gifted in this area, you're a long-range strategist and a big-picture thinker, and you are future oriented. You also process information visually, transforming thoughts or senses into pictures. Your spiritual purpose calls on your ability to see into and help create a desirable future for yourself and for others.

Deficiencies and Excesses of the Sixth Chakra

Deficiencies result in an inability to see the obvious, denial of problems or challenges, being easy to deceive, chaos, codependency, abusive relationships, difficulty in planning the future, memory loss, lack of joy, anxiety, and perception issues.

Excesses result in fantasizing, hallucinations, difficulty concentrating, obsessiveness, delusions, nightmares, self-centeredness, and turmoil.

When the Sixth Chakra Is Balanced

A person with a well-balanced sixth chakra has keen intellect and strong intuition, and uses imagination in a positive fashion. He or she can see the big picture, perceive and influence spiritual planes, and can readily establish goals and take action.[20]

Ajña Symbols: The Sixth Chakra Yantra

Ajña is represented by a downward-pointing triangle (trikona) called the *tritasra* within a circle, with two petals forming a lotus. The three corners of the trikona are associated with Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara, one of the forms of Shiva known as the destroyer and restorer of worlds. These angles also represent the three *gunas* (qualities) that arise on this level.

Inside the yoni is a form of Shiva called Itara in his phallic, or Shiva lingam, form. The lingam is described as red, golden, or shining white, looks like streaks of lightning, and is denoted as a bindu point in the center of the triangle. This lingam is the symbol of the causal world and is connected to the Rudra knot.

A pericarp is the seed vessel of a lotus, the part that contains the vital seeds. Within a chakra, it holds many of the images or symbols. In ajña, the pericarp encloses the Shakti Hakini. Above her is the moon-white lingam. In some systems the deity Ardhanarishvara, a hermaphrodite form of Shiva and Shakti, also resides in the lingam. In others one first perceives Hakini in the pericarp, itara linga in the triangle above her, and then pranava—the seed syllable *aum*—in the triangle above him, and finally the symbol for *manas,* or the mind tattva, at the top. Two white petals are associated with the ajña.

The soma nectar, or amrita, lies in the hollow of the ajña kshetram, which is located at the meeting ground of the ida, pingala, and sushumna in a region called the tripatha sthana or trikuti, the space between the eyebrows. This area forms a red hexagonal region. Because of this junction, this area is called *muktha triveni*, which means "three strands that create liberation," and Prayag, the ancient name for the city where the rivers Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati meet. These three cities represent the ida, pingala, and sushumna nadis, respectively.[21]

Ajña's Component Parts

Gross Element: Light

Subtle Element: This is the supreme element; all other elements are present

Color of the Element: Transparent

Sound of the Element: Om

Attribute: Unity and ego [22]

Sound Carrier: Ajña is not always associated with a sound carrier; when it is, the most frequent is the black antelope.[23]

Petals: The ajña lotus is beautifully white like the moon and is often described as being as cool as a moonbeam. It is formed of two petals upon which are inscribed the letters ha or ham and ksa or ksham, which are also white. These petals represent the ida and pingala nadis—lunar and solar energy—which meet in the sushumna before rising to the crown chakra. Ham is written on the left petal and represents Shiva; ksham is written on the right petal, representing Shakti. These are also the manifested and unmanifested minds, respectively.

These two petals are not static; rather, they radiate power. One petal sends energy down through the five lower chakras and the other sends energy into the higher chakras. In these radiations are the five vayus, five divine powers, and kundalini. This lotus is said to shine with the glory of *dhyana*, or meditation.

The letters upon the petals are written this way in Sanskrit: हं क्षं [24]

Cosmic Realm or Plane

The cosmic realm is *tapas loka*, the plane of austerity and home of the blessed.

Ruling Goddess

Within ajña is Hakini, who is white and holds in her hand a white moon, rosary, skull, book, and a mudra that grants boons and dispels fears. She has

six red faces with three eyes in each and sits on a white lotus.[25]

Ruling Gods

Most of the time the god associated with this chakra is Shiva as the god of both destruction and the divine dance, who has full control over his desires through meditation. Also linked with this chakra is Ardhanarishvara, the perfect blend of Shiva and Shakti. In this form the right side of his body is white and represents the Shiva aspect, and the left is golden and stands for Shakti. Essentially, Ardhanarishvara is androgynous and encourages us to blend our masculine and feminine aspects of self. As would suit the ajña chakra's reputation as the center of clairvoyance, the third eye of Shiva is called *sva-netra*, the organ of clairvoyance.[26]

Ruling Planet

The sixth chakra is ruled by Neptune, the watery planet devoted to mystery and psychic activity.

Granthi (Knot)

Associated with ajña is the third granthi (kundalini knot), the Rudra knot. Linked with the itara linga, which is illuminated by flashing white lightning, it is the symbol of the causal world as well as the androgynous state. Rudra is also known as Shiva, the god of destruction. This granthi invites us to see everything as sacred and holy. Once unlocked, the changes owing to kundalini reaching this energy center are locked inside. The aspirant's consciousness can now rise to sahasrara and reach the infinite dimensions.[27]

Intuitive Abilities

SIDDHI

By concentrating on this center, the yogi destroys karma from all past lives and receives almost indescribable benefits, acquiring all eight major and thirty-two minor siddhis.[28] Ironically, in order to fully rise to the crown chakra, a yogi must detach from the siddhis activated in ajña or they will remain attached to the three gunas and will not be able to enter a nondual state of being.[29]

Contemporary Gifts

These can include the following: aeromancy (divination by interpreting clouds or atmospheric conditions), alomancy (divining conducted by the fall of thrown salt), aura reading, catoptromancy (divination using a mirror), clairvoyance (clear seeing), cleromancy (the casting of bones or stones for signs), crystallomancy (seeing the future in a crystal ball), déjà vu (sensing an event that has already occurred), and gyromancy (divination that starts with the drawing of a circle in which the perimeter is marked by the letters of the alphabet; the diviner spins around to select letters for a message). Other gifts include hydromancy (interpreting signs by the appearance and movement of water), I Ching, libanomancy (gaining information through the curl of smoke, usually incense), oculomancy (divining by gazing into another's eyes and interpreting reactions), precognition, scrying (telling the future through a crystal ball or reflective surface), tarot reading, tasseography (fortune-telling by interpreting patterns in tea leaves, coffee grounds, or other sediments), transfiguration (the transformation into a more spiritual state), and aspects of astral projection, chiromancy (palm reading), dream interpretation, energetic healing, feng shui, megagnomy (use of psychicism in a trance state), past-life regression, prophecy, and most additional forms of divination.

Subtle Energy Partners

Related Auric Field And Its Functions

The sixth auric layer is located atop the fifth auric field. Some practitioners believe it emanates from inside of the body; I see it about two and a half feet away from the skin. It is featured in chapters 20 and 32.

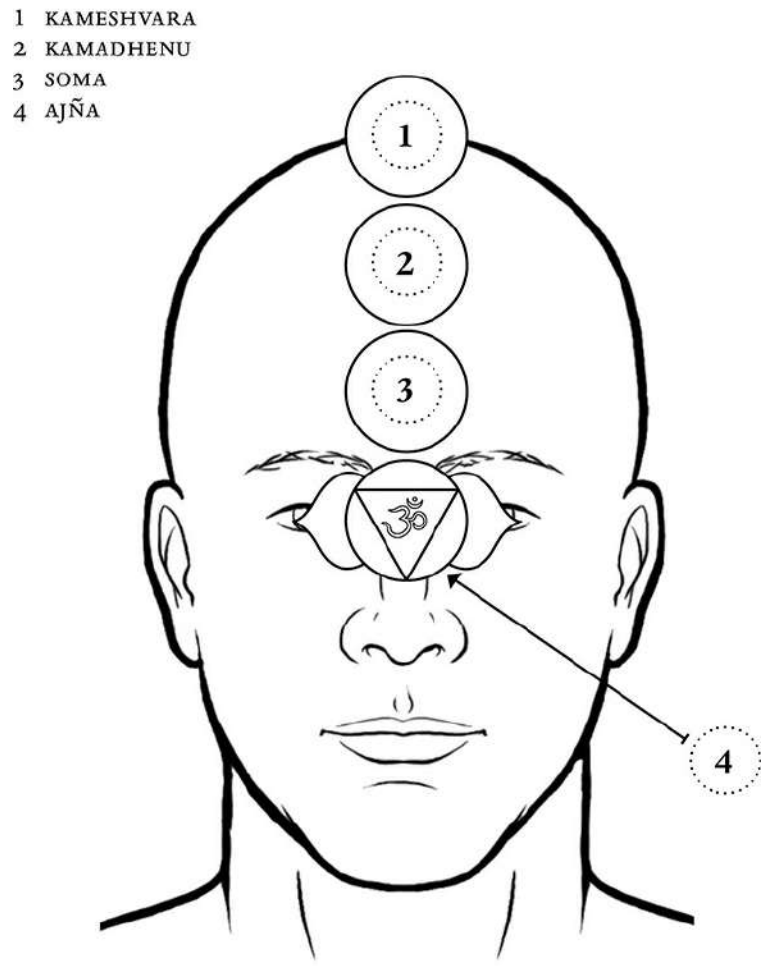


ILLUSTRATION 15—THE THREE MAIN SECONDARY CHAKRAS OF THE AJÑA: There are typically three main secondary chakras, often considered two subchakras with a bridge between them, associated with the ajña. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

SECONDARY CHAKRAS

Although most tantric experts place ajña in the brow, that location is often considered only an external manifestation of this chakra. The primary location is in the midbrain, behind the brows. Just as ajña seems to have its own shadow, so is it linked to several secondary chakras, some of which arguably might "belong" either to manipura, vishuddha, or sahasrara. In this section we will examine two of the most common approaches to these extra chakras.

In many systems, the three main secondary chakras linked to ajña are soma, kameshvara, and kamadhenu. There are many perceptions of these chakras. The main secondary chakra is the soma. It is usually located within sahasrara and just above ajña. Some systems perceive it as a collection of three individual chakras. Others perceive two chakras within a subchakra, and still others see chakra-like energy centers that operate through ajña. If we perceive it as two subchakras with a chakra bridge, we arrive at Illustration 15 and the following explanation of the soma, the kameshvara subchakra, and the bridge, kamadhenu, which is shown in a metaphorical form (rather than looking like a bridge).

Soma: Soma is pictured as a light blue–white lotus with twelve or sometimes sixteen petals and a crescent of silver. The moon is the source of the amrita nectar, often called soma, which actually flows from kamadhenu. The chakra is sometimes represented by a face with a chakra on the forehead and is associated with the mental clarity needed to achieve enlightenment.

Kamadhenu: This chakra is the holding place of Kamadhenu, the white-faced cow goddess. She is known as the "cow of plenty" that meets all desires. She lives in the heavens, having emerged from the ocean of milk during the time of the gods, or *devas*, and the demons, or *asuras*. As a chakra, this energetic body is a bridge between ajña and kameshvara.

Kameshvara: This chakra is just above the spot where Kamadhenu resides. Kameshvara is a handsome male god, seated in this spot like a yogi. He is here to embrace Kameshvari, the most beautiful of women, who is also kundalini in one of her many forms. In this area she is united with the lord Param Shiva. This union is known as *tantra*, or expanded consciousness, as it is linked to enjoyment, or *bhoga*, and detachment, or *yoga*.

In this chakra lies a triangle surrounded by Kameshvara and Kameshvari. This triangle, in tantric terms, is called the A-KA-THA

Triangle and is formed by three main nadi: vama, jveshtha, and raudri. These nadis also form a triangle in muladhara and enfold a version of Shakti and Shiva.

As Shakti rises to Kameshvara, knowledge, feelings, and actions transform into truth, beauty, and goodness. This occurs because the three gunas and three bindus combine.[30]

There are several other systems that detail the complex array of energy centers related to the ajña center. A brief overview of a yoga approach, presented by Alain Daniélou in his book *Yoga: Mastering the Secrets of Matter and the Universe*, is as follows. I will arrange these chakra-like centers, or energetic points, from ajña upward.

Ajña: The command center.

Principal Aperature: This is the unification site for ida, pingala, and sushumna, known as the Sacred City of Prayaga.

Brahmarandhra: This center is sometimes associated with the root of the palate, sometimes the upper back of the neck, and most frequently with the top of the head. It is actually a part of sahasrara. It is the dwelling house of the human soul and corresponds to the *dasamadvara*, or tenth opening or tenth door, the hollow place in the crown, called the fontanelle, that is open in the newborn. It is more thoroughly discussed in chapter 10.

Manas: This is the mind center, which is also associated with manipura and discussed in chapter 6. In relation to ajña, many systems place manas near ajña. It has six petals. Five represent the senses; the sixth, the world of dreams or illusory knowledge.

Soma: As described earlier, this chakra has sixteen petals. It is sometimes called the Center of Offering or the City of Freedom, where dwells the unmanifested divine. Herein the yogi experiences light. (This chakra is also called the chandra or indu chakra.)

The Seven Causal Forms: These forms, called karana-rupa, lie near ajña. They surround the individual self and are the origin of the causal, subtle, and gross containers of this reality.

1. Moon, or *indu*: This is the bindu (point) between the unmanifested and the manifest, located in the forehead.
2. Intellect, or *bodhini*, which means "wisdom."
3. Causal vibration, or *nada*. Shaped like the moon.
4. Arch causal vibration, or *maha nada*. Flaming and shaped like a plough.
5. Partibility or pervasive energy, the *kala*. Considered crooked or beyond the grasp of the mind.
6. Undifferentiated energy, or *saman*; an aspect of supreme energy.
7. Dispelling of mental attachment, or *unmani*. A person who reaches this level does not return to the world of form but retains the full memory of the self.

Mani Pitha: Called the Center of the Jeweled Altar (or the hrit chakra in chapter 7), this chakra has twelve petals. Within it is a triangle that holds the sacred altar of jewels, or *mani pitha*. This altar is surrounded by the Ocean of Ambrosia, or *amrita-arnava*. At the apex of the triangle is the bindu where manifestation begins; below it is the Transcendent Lord of Sleep, Parama Shiva. In the other angles of the triangle are the sun and the moon, which combine to sixteen digits. The seventeenth is the lotus of life, or *jivana kala*.

Sahasrara: Here we find the formal location of sahasrara. There are other chakras above this one, which are covered in chapter 10.[31]

There is yet another important approach to ajña's secondary chakras, one that unifies some of the concepts just described in a simpler system. It is a basis for discussions in the next chapter. This viewpoint basically unifies the ajña-related secondary chakras in a three-thousand-year-old Vedic description of the antahkarana chakra, sometimes called an inner organ,

which is often represented as a four-petalled lotus right above ajña. These four petals represent four distinct mental functions: *citta,* or basic mental consciousness; *manas,* or a sense-mind, which adds a subjective reaction to the reactions stemming from citta; *buddhi,* or intelligence, the first construct of consciousness; and *ahankara,* or ego sense. These four qualities are related to *sattva*, one of the three main *gunas* (qualities).

These four qualities are often associated with specific chakras. When the manas chakra (described in chapter 6 in relation to manipura) is affiliated with ajña, it is explained as the seat of the citta and lower mental functions such as instinct, reactions, patterns, and habits. It has six petals; its seed mantra is *aum* or *om* and is located right above the ajña.

In this version, the indu chakra would now be located at the front part of the brain and considered the seat of intellect and higher mind. It is often affiliated with buddhi intelligence, which is the intelligence of wisdom and knowledge.

Indu means "moon." This chakra, sometimes called the chandra chakra, is basically the same as the soma chakra. At other times it is affiliated with the bindu visarga, covered in chapter 10. In comparison with the talu and lalana palate described in chapter 8, the ajña-oriented chakras are most often affiliated with the upper forehead, while those in the talu and lalana palate are affiliated with the back of the mouth area.[32]

Above these chakras most systems add several others that are most often associated with sahasrara. In ascending order, these chakras are the nirvana and guru chakras, which lead to the sahasrara and then to a bindu point above the crown chakra. Some systems add the mahanada point between the indu and the nirvana chakras; this point will be described in the next chapter, as will additional secondary chakra points and concepts.[33]

As well, Chinese alchemists linked the sixth and seventh chakras to the upper dantian, which you will read about in chapter 25. Also called the Crystal Palace, Heavenly Heart, or the Cavity of Spirit, it is similar to the Taoist "Sacred Square Inch." Sufi alchemists call it *ruh*. Jewish alchemists call it *ruach*, and it is comparable to several sephiroth, the topic of chapter

28. In Western alchemy this area is seen as the transformation center in which the ajña and sahasrara chakras ferment, distill, and coagulate the nectar.[34]

In this precious chakra we perceive only light, the supreme element in which all others are contained. This translucent element well describes ajña, our sixth chakra, which is usually pictured as violet and is located in the medulla plexus and linked with the pituitary. Governing the bodily aspects in its area, it has no associated vital breath or sense organ, although its action organ is the mind. This is fitting, as ajña manages everything from our vision and perception, including higher thinking, to our clairvoyant and other magical capabilities. It is symbolized by a downward-pointing triangle within a circle, with two petals associated with the lotus.

Associated with the sound *aum*, here we choose between ego and unity, also accessing the cosmic realm of tapas loka, the home of austerity and the blessed. The goddess is Hakini and the god is Shiva or Ardhvanarsvara, and this chakra is associated with Neptune and the third granthi. Linked to the sixth auric field, it is the sixth activated chakra, opening in adulthood in the Hindu system.

As kundalini transcends ajña, she enters her final abode: sahasrara, or the seventh chakra, which I will describe next.

[contents]

The Seventh Hindu Chakra

SAHASRARA

NOT ALL THOSE who wander are lost.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

For the yogi, reaching the sahasrara chakra is the end of a journey, a long and winding odyssey symbolized by the river of kundalini energy. The merging of Shakti and Shiva at this highest center in the primary Hindu system also initiates the next journey, one found in the word *essence*.

A new set of questions births within our soul: What is our absolute and true essential nature? How do we create the most authentic lifestyle? How do we walk as if arisen while keeping our feet on the ground? What does the Greater Essence mean to us—and others? We realize that these are the questions that have served as markers on the map of our lives since we were children.

Sahasrara is the chakra of a thousand petals, representing a thousand nerve endings in the limbic system,[1] the termination of a thousand yoga nadis, and the transcendence of the physical world.[2] Imprinted upon the petals are all fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet as well as their twenty permutations or layers. All spiritual energies and truths meet in this space as Shiva and Shakti —the masculine and feminine—finally and completely merge, creating brahmananda. *Brahman* means "the Absolute" and *ananda* means "bliss." Brahmananda therefore represents the blissful state of merging and dwelling with the Absolute. This, the seventh chakra, becomes the "door to pure consciousness," and in walking through it we realize that we have always yearned to dissolve our perceived problems in this cauldron of higher truth.

Technically sahasrara wasn't always considered a *shat-chakra*, or main chakra. Rather, it was an elevated energy center with an intimate connection

to the lower six chakras. Because of its unique subtle attributes the ancients often located it above the body, although it is now usually perceived as being at the top of the head.

Within sahasrara we complete the final kosha, the anandamaya sheath, which also serves as the causal body. This energy body, described in detail in several later parts of this book, works with causal energy, the form of energy I mentioned earlier that directs various types of subtle and physical energy. We enter the *satya loka,* or "abode of truth," and achieve *samadhi*, the state of bliss. In other words, we begin enjoying supreme bliss, or *parama ananda*, attaining the supraconscious state related to being a *brahmavidvarishtha*: a full-blown *jnani,* or guru. We drink fully of amrita, the nectar of the gods, and we play just as the gods would have us do—while enjoying the true gift of being alive: love.

Most Familiar Sanskrit Name and Meaning

Sahasrara means "thousand," testifying to this chakra as the "lotus of the thousand petals." It appears as a kind of layered umbrella of petals, often containing all the colors of the rainbow. The term can also mean "void" and "dwelling place without support."[3]

Other Names

As with all the other main Hindu chakras, in the Tantras we find a variety of other names for this energy center: adhomukha mahapadma, amlana padma, dashashatadala padma, pankaja, sahasrabja, sahasrachchada panikaja, sahasradala, sahasradala adhomukha padma, sahasradala padma, sahasrapatra, sahasrara, sahasrara ambuja, sahasrara mahapadma, sahasrara padma, sahasrara saroruha, shiras padma, shuddha padma, wyoma, and wyomambhoja. In the Vedas and late Upanishads are added the names akasha chakra, kapalasamputa, sahasrara, sahasrara kamala (pankaja or padma), sthana, and wyomambuja. In the *Puranas* we find parama, sahasradala, sahasraparna padma, sahasrapatra, shantyatita, and shantyatita pada. In the teachings of Agni Yoga it is called the brahmarandhra and is often referred to

as “the bell” or the “hole of Brahman.” Other names are sehasara and sahastrar, as well as the crown or seventh chakra.[4]

Location

Some texts locate the chakra at the top of the head and others slightly above it; when found outside of the head, it is four fingerbreadths above the crown. Many describe it as residing in the cerebral cavity, linked with the cerebral plexus. It is the site of the supreme bindu.[5]

Purpose

Sahasrara is the seat of spirituality.

Color

Usually seen as white in color, it is sometimes seen as violet or gold.

Chakra Activation

Anodea Judith places activation during early adulthood and beyond. In the twelve-chakra system, activation takes place between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one; this chakra is also open when the baby is first born and the fontanel is still open. There is seldom an age associated with the activation of this chakra in the Hindu system, although some systems assign ages forty-two through forty-nine.

Associated Gland

The commonly associated hormone gland is the pineal gland, but a few texts associate it with the pituitary; see Illustration 16.

The Pineal Gland: Sahasrara’s Endocrine Gland

The pineal gland is a pinecone-shaped gland in the diencephalon section of the brain. As you can see in Illustration 16, it lies close to the pituitary gland as well as several other glands and structures.

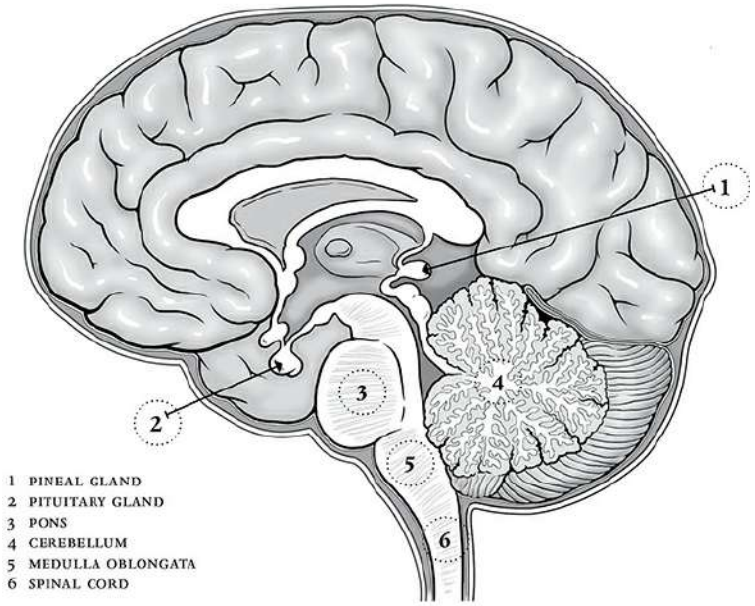


ILLUSTRATION 16—THE LOCATION OF THE PINEAL GLAND: The pineal gland is located in the mid-brain behind the pituitary gland. It is developed from the roof of the diencephalon, which includes the thalamus, hypothalamus, and posterior part of the pituatary, among other components, and is located behind the third cerebral ventricle between the two hemispheres of the brain. As most systems suggest, the petals of the pineal gland cover the lower part of the brain, which runs much of the limbic system, thus enabling a true transformation from our "flight, fight, or freeze" self to a higher state of consciousness. And as discussed in the "PARTNERS IN PERCEPTION: The Pineal and the Pituitary" section later in this chapter, all shown bodily areas are vital to a kundalini transformation. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

The pineal gland is partly composed of a small number of neurons from the retina of the eye routed to the pineal from the optical ganglia.[6] It is also composed of pinealocytes and glial cells.[7] Pinealocytes are non-nerve cells involved in the creation of melatonin that interact with parts of the nervous system. They also make the pineal gland sensitive to environmental light.[8] Glial cells aren't neurons either, although they do make up about 90 percent of our brain cells.

Certain types of glial cells contribute to thought. Neuroscientist Andrew Koob believes that these cells might also be the source of

imagination.[9] Using calcium as a messenger, they pass messages chemically, whereas most neurons also use electrical signals. They talk not only to their glial neighbors but can send messages far away, often throughout the body, repairing injuries, defending against disease, healing neurons, and even eradicating pathogens. They also maintain the correct concentrations of ions and neurotransmitters in the neural environment and help decide what substances can pass through the blood-brain barrier into the brain.[10]

Problems with glial cells have been implicated in diseases including Alzheimer's, certain types of heart problems, and multiple sclerosis.[11] And when invasive brain injuries occur, it seems that certain glial cells take on the role of serving as stem cells, both in utero and out, thus repairing the brain.[12]

As you read the rest of this chapter, you will discover that many of the glial functions, especially in relationship with the pineal gland, are applicable to and consistent with the ancients' understanding of sahasrara and the effects of kundalini energy upon it. To push the envelope, you might think about "Where's Waldo," the game in the children's books that feature complicated images in which a figure named Waldo is hidden. Discussions will reveal that glial cells in particular might explain some of sahasrara's ability to accomplish the following:

- open the higher siddhi, especially visions and experiences related to higher consciousness—all of which require the use of imagination
- enable superhuman healing of disease
- make use of substances potentially found in the amrita such as calcium, fluids, and ions
- enable the pineal gland to receive substances through the blood-brain barrier that are not allowed into other parts of the

brain

- affect the relationship between a dysfunctional pineal gland and an increased susceptibility to Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, and more
- promote the development of the third eye (described in chapter 9), as the pineal gland is also linked with the pituitary gland through the third cerebral ventricle

The pineal gland might very well be the seat of the soul, the term most often ascribed to it by the ancients, and one reiterated by René Descartes.

As an endocrine gland, the pineal has several vital functions. Physically it secretes a series of hormones that regulate bodywide endocrine functions, our nervous system's relationship with various endocrine signals, our circadian rhythms and sleep, and sexual development. It does this by producing a series of hormones based primarily on the amino acid tryptophan to interact with other substances as well as with external light. A simple outline of the sequence is this: tryptophan, serotonin, melatonin, pinoline, 5-methoxy-dimethyl-tryptamine (5-MeO-DMT), and dimethyltryptamine (DMT).[13]

Tryptophan is an essential amino acid found in most protein-based foods. It helps regulate appetite, sleep, and mood. The pineal gland uses it to make melatonin during the night and serotonin during the day. Melatonin aids in sleep but also helps us adapt to seasonal changes; alleviates delirium and, potentially, autistic symptoms; and acts as an antioxidant and anticarcinogen. It is also being studied for its role in helping prevent high blood pressure, alcoholism, and epilepsy, among other conditions. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that regulates sleep, body temperature, appetite, and emotions. Pinoline is a neurochemical involved in consciousness, and 5-MeO-DMT is a tryptamine, a

class of psychedelics. While it is produced in small amounts in our body, it also occurs in the venom of certain toads as well as in plants, seeds, and bark resin, and it is used for its hallucinatory effects. DMT is a naturally occurring tryptamine and neurotransmitter and is also used as a hallucinogenic drug when employed through substances such as LSD.[14]

Many scientists have linked these chemicals—especially pinoline, 5-MeO-DMT, and DMT—with mystical experiences. For instance, highly stressful situations such as childbirth, sexual bliss (a pleasant form of stress), physical distress, and near-death phenomena are often accompanied by a massive DMT emission, which can create visions including white light, ecstatic emotions, timelessness, and spiritual contact. Symptoms associated with conditions such as epilepsy cause negative reactions such as panic and fear but can also create a cascade of temporal lobe reactions that create some of the same mystical states, including cosmic insights, flashbacks, and beatific states. Various parts of the brain work together to balance stress-induced symptoms while allowing the pineal gland, chief among other glands and organs, to create positive mystical experiences such as being linked with God, other people, or the universe.[15] Scientists including Serena M. Roney-Douglas of the Psi Research Centre in Glastonbury, England, have shown that the pineal gland must produce the correct balance of *all* its chemicals, not only a few, in order to allow for mystical experiences that don't lead to psychoses such as schizophrenia. For instance, pinoline operates as a neuromodulator by preventing the breakdown of serotonin. Too much pinoline results in too much serotonin, which has been implicated in an increase of DMT and resulting hallucinations, depression, mania, and acute psychotic breakdowns.[16]

As the ancients often asserted, all the siddhis are available upon activation of sahasrara, if not ajña. The true yogi, however,

understands that enlightenment is often accompanied by an ability to resist using the siddhi.[17] True enlightenment isn't about the use of powers; rather, it involves recognizing the power inherent in unity. Perhaps one of the physiological reasons for this wisdom is based on understanding the potential dangers inherent in accessing all of the pineal gland's psychoactive properties.

The other lens through which to view the pineal gland is its role as an electromagnetic sensor. The earth's crust generates a powerful negative magnetic field, while the sun exerts a positive magnetic force. Our bodies are healthiest when in balance between these two forces. For instance, at night the earth's field increases cellular oxygen, encourages sleep, supports healing, reduces inflammation, and releases pain.[18]

It is well documented that the pineal gland is sensitive to all types of magnetic fields.[19] This is true for birds as well as mammals, including humans. The pineal often synchronizes our circadian and seasonal reactions with corresponding biological changes in our body.[20] One of the reasons for this is that the pineal and pituitary glands are closely affiliated with magnetic sensing materials—or crystals—in the brain, many of which are located in the ethmoid bone in the sinus, close to the pineal and pituitary glands.[21] Crystals have also been found, however, in most human brain tissue: five million "single-domain" crystals per gram for most tissues and more than a hundred million crystals per gram for pia matter and dura matter in the brain. A domain is a region within magnetic material that is magnetically uniform. "Single domain" means that the entire crystal is uniformly magnetized (versus multi-domain crystals, in which the magnetic flow can go one or more ways).[22] These crystals are usually found in clumps of between fifty and a hundred particles; they are also found in other parts of the body.[23] The main

crystalline material in the brain is magnetite, a black mineral form of iron oxide that serves as a compass when present in organisms. It is found in bees, birds, and fish that navigate by compass direction. Magnetite crystals in bacteria orient them toward the earth's magnetic fields. This is the main crystal in the human brain, which can produce more of it whenever it is needed.

Research shows that the entirety of the body is a gigantic electromagnetic frequency (EMF) generator, a sort of piezoelectrical (electricity produced by pressure) crystal. A complicated mix of the body's proteins, DNA, and other factors form a piezoelectrical crystal lattice that can change EMF oscillations to mechanical vibrations and vice versa. Because of this lattice, external EMF fields can induce bone formation, energy functions in the cells, protein synthesis, and other important life functions.[24] Magnetite has been linked to the pineal gland's response to light, external magnetism, and other functions. Unfortunately, most individuals' glands calcify by the teen years into small crystals typically called "brain sand"; studies show that at the least this results in a decreased sense of direction, but it can also inhibit all pineal gland functions.[25] In fact, magnetite crystals have been linked to Alzheimer's disease, the levels increasing with the disease's severity.[26]

Yet another crystal has recently been detected in the pineal gland: calcite, which exists in small units there. Calcite crystals have been shown to support the pineal's piezoelectrical properties.[27]

Studies show that exposure to extreme or artificial electromagnetic fields disturbs the pineal gland's function. For instance, research conducted by Barry W. Wilson et al. and published in the *Journal of Pineal Research* showed that individuals exposed to EMF in the range of 60 hertz (Hz)

negatively affected the gland's activity. (A hertz is the change in a cyclical waveform of one cycle per second; 60-hertz EMF changes direction sixty times a second.) This study involved exposure to conventional blankets and continuous polymer-wire electric blankets for eight weeks. Yet another study, conducted at the University of Bern in Switzerland, studied the effect of 16.6 Hz magnetic fields on the pineal gland's secretion. The research was conducted on 108 male railway workers following their start of service on electrically powered engines or working under transmission lines. The result was similar to the previously cited study.[28]

The types of effects on the body in reaction to EMF that affect us negatively include a decline in immune resistance; an increase in abnormal cell development, including cancer, birth, defects, and infertility; and an increase in psychological problems such as drug addiction.[29] An underarousal of EMF can lead to reactive depression, ADHD, chronic pain, and insomnia. An overarousal of EMF can lead to anxiety, sleep onset problems, nightmares, impulsivity, anger, aggressiveness, nerve pain, and more. A combination can create a blend of anxiety and depression as well as ADHD.

In fact, all kinds of conditions in addition to human-generated EMF affect the health of our pineal gland, including unusual light and dark rhythms, radiation, nutritional imbalances, temperature swings, sunspots, the moon's rotation, the revolution of planets, high altitude, and daily stress, in addition to EMF and magnetic fields.[30] So what can we do about negative EMF? In a way, this entire book is an answer to that question, and here's how.

The pineal gland is restored through a process called "kindling," an entraining of brain nerves with positive EMF, such as that produced by the earth's magnetic fields. Meditation produces a like effect, cascading the entire brain with the same alpha and

theta fields generated by global EMF waves. Alpha waves, which occur at 7 to 13 cycles per second, encourage dreaming and light meditation. These waves call forth our creativity and help us enter deeper states of consciousness. Theta waves cycle at 4 to 7 cycles per section and are dominant in our deepest state of meditation. These waves are associated with mystery, healing, and the extraordinary. While we are in the type of trance state that kindles our association with natural frequencies, information is transferred directly into our body, synchronizing us with the earth.

Various chakra healing modalities, including shamanic dancing and drumming, have always helped accomplish this attunement. Mudras, chants, and other Hindu-based practices fulfill the same task.[31] Nearly all the chakra medicine practices enable this type of kindling and restoration.

Partners in Perception: The Pineal and the Pituitary

Your pituitary gland, the seat of the mind, and your pineal gland, the seat of illumination, are partners in many mystical activities, including those associated with kundalini and psychism. In fact, many experts believe that the two must join to create a fully functional third eye. One such expert is yogi H. H. Shri Kumarswamiji.[32] Shri Kumarswamiji, who died in 1995, was a guru recognized by many Eastern and Western followers.[33]

Logistics supports this assertion. As Illustration 16 shows, the pineal gland is situated in the midbrain, behind and just above the pituitary. It contains pigment also found in the eyes and is connected to the thalamus, two large masses of gray substances in between the cerebral hemispheres on either side of the third

ventricle. The thalamus relays sensory information and is a center for pain perception. The pineal gland is at the back side of this ventricle, and the pituitary is in its roof. It is said that the mingling essences of these glands in the third ventricle opens the third eye.

What is the third ventricle of the brain? It is a narrow opening near the base of the cerebral hemispheres. It also separates the two areas of the thalamus that store our sensory reactions. When the energies of the pituitary and pineal glands merge, we can access higher knowledge—and avoid becoming or remaining stuck in our personal experiences. The actual path of the rising kundalini is said to occur through the nerve channels and then enter the medulla oblongata, move into the pons area of the brain, and descend into the pituitary gland behind the eyes. From here it radiates through the third ventricle to awaken the pineal gland and our connection with higher dimensions.[34]

Other physiological factors result in a conjoint mystical relationship between the pineal and the pituitary. The pineal gland is not protected by the brain's blood barrier. This means that it receives a lot of blood (and therefore nourishment), second only to the kidneys. This also implies that it constantly "knows" what is going on with the rest of the body. Located at the top end of the spinal column, the pineal gland ends in the oldest section of the brain, which regulates our most primal concerns. What happens when kundalini fully activates the pineal gland? The release of mystical hormones lights up our entire self, transforming our limbic system and lower chakras simultaneously.

As we explored in the preceding chapter, the pituitary gland, representing ajña, is located in the sphenoid cavity and is therefore in a perfect position to receive secretions from the pineal gland, in the same way as suggested by the ancients.

Taoists call the area between the pineal and the pituitary the "Crystal Palace," which seems fitting, given the presence of crystals there.[35]

What Is Amrita Made Of?

What physical ingredients might compose the nectar called amrita that is produced by sahasrara and received by ajña? According to Jana Dixon, author of *The Biology of Kundalini*,[36] it is a mixture of the following:

Endogenous Cannabinoids: Cannabinoids are chemicals in the body that activate the cell receptors that invite the high we get from substances like marijuana. Endogenous cannabinoids are those produced in our own bodies. These affect our mood, appetite, pain, inflammatory response, and memory.[37]

Enkaphalins: These are neurotransmitters that suppress pain. They are usually classified as endorphins and create a "rush" in the body.[38]

Vasopressin: This hormone is formed by the hypothalamus and secreted by the pituitary gland. It controls water retention and also encourages bonding.[39]

Ca2+ Ions: "Ca" stands for calcium. Calcium ions help pass information between neurons and along a neuron. An ion is a molecule or atom that has a charge. Ions energize the movement of energy in our nervous and muscular systems. And as you learned in "The Pineal Gland: Sahasrara's Endocrine Gland," Ca2+ signals can also serve as a medium for glia cells, in addition to neuron-glia interaction.[40]

Glutamate: An amino acid essential for brain function, learning, and metabolism, it helps pass messages along the nerves.[41]

Oxytocin: Oxytocin helps people bond, induces optimism and self-esteem, heals wounds, relieves pain, provides stress relief, inspires generosity, serves as a diet aid, and prevents a number of psychological and physiological problems.[42]

Polarized Water: Water is highly polarized; its two molecules, hydrogen and oxygen, have different charges. This means it can interact with itself and form a sort of intermolecular network.[43] This polarized water is most likely generated by glial cells and neurons that have accumulated in the cerebrospinal fluid and collected in the ventricle under the pineal gland. At this point, it finds its way into the sphenoid sinus under the pituitary. When excited—such as during an orgasm or a kundalini rising—this fluid is secreted from the sinuses and dropped into the back of the throat.[44]

Body Parts Managed

Sahasrara manages the pineal gland, skull, brain stem, cranial nerves, cranial plexus, cerebral cortex, nervous system, brain, cranium bones, the top of the head, and the central nervous system. Sometimes the right eye and right brain hemisphere are associated with this chakra, and the left eye and brain hemisphere with the sixth chakra.[45]

Predominant Sense and Sense Organ

The seventh chakra exists beyond the physical, so there is no sense or sense organ.

Action Organ

If there is an action organ, it is the pineal gland, but again, sahasrara is considered to be beyond physical.

Vital Breath

Sahasrara is beyond breath.

Related Diseases

Diseases related to this energy center are disorders of the muscular and skeletal systems and the skin, depression, chronic exhaustion not linked to a physical disorder, headaches, coordination challenges, migraines, dizziness (from too much energy in upper chakras), brain tumors, amnesia, Alzheimer's, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, learning issues, psychosis, neurosis, insomnia, and sensitivity to light, sound, or the environment.[46]

Psychological Functions

The main psychological issues associated with this chakra involve our emotional and mental relationships with the higher virtues such as hope, faith, awareness, consciousness, and truth. Ultimately all misperceptions create a dogma, or emotional block, that supports karma rather than grace. We clear these dramas by resolving conflicts between the ego and higher self.

Psychosis, learning issues, neurosis, and other major psychological challenges, including aspects of depression and anxiety, are often related to this chakra. Certainly there are genetic, biochemical, and experiential reasons for these issues. From a chakra point of view, however, these challenges involve a misunderstanding of spiritual principles, including self-love and self-perception. Can we see ourselves as fully loved by the Divine and as worthy of union? Exploring questions such as these can ultimately lead us to peace and serenity, no matter our issues.[47]

Here, too, we examine issues of entity possession or curses. Because of the link between this chakra and higher planes, energies or souls committed to darkness often prey on those opening to further light through processes such as the activation of the seventh chakra. Unenlightened themselves—too scared or shameful to seek the Divine—they often try to steal light from those with seventh chakra brilliance. Short of that, they do anything they can to stop the enlightenment process of the living, as they are often jealous of the joy attributed to illumination.[48]

Associated Archetypes

The positive archetype for this energy center is the Guru, who uses intelligence and analysis to understand the world. He or she is one with Spirit and operates by spiritual laws.[49]

On the negative side, the archetype here is the Egotist, enmeshed in the physical world and taking little notice of the spiritual. The positive expression of the Egotist is recognition of the self as an individual.[50]

Personality Profile

Previous to opening the seventh chakra, we tend to associate with one personality style more than another—we might be heartily first chakra–based or lovingly fourth chakra–based. With a clear crown chakra we can gain a wider understanding of our higher self, even while maintaining the personality we have already developed. The difference is that we are also able to expand our perspective to understand all others.[51]

Having said this, the main personality gifts of a seventh chakra person involve being spiritual, highly conscious, and expressive of universal truths and thoughts. You'll gravitate toward sacred philosophies, intrinsically understanding the differences between good, bad, and evil. Your sensitivities can be directed in practical ways, such as helping others with their personal spiritual callings or, more esoterically, leading others in spiritual pursuits, perhaps involving a ministry or spiritual function. You are also able to perceive spirits and conduct yourself in the spiritual realm.

Frequently I find that individuals with a really strong seventh chakra struggle to manage their relationship with the darkness in this world. I consider seventh chakra persons to be prophets, people who are able to discern what is divine will versus what is not. They are also able to sense others' potential, or the nature of their true essence.

Most seventh chakra individuals would rather believe in another's positive qualities, even if they are not apparent in the personality, than focus on their negativity. This frequently leads to unhealthy relationships in which the seventh chakra prophet puts up with harmful treatment such as abuse, lies, or demeaning comments, waiting for the good to show up. As angelic as the

traits of a seventh chakra person are, I remind them they are walking this planet and have permission to decide who they relate to based on what is obvious, not hidden.

Deficiencies and Excesses of the Seventh Chakra

Deficiencies in this energy center lead to a lack of purpose, ethics, joy, and trust; loss of meaning or identity; apathy; materialism; selfishness; an inability to put closure on unfinished business; fear of religion or spirituality; unwise decisions; spiritual cynicism; learning difficulties; fear of death; and feeling alone and separate from others. It may also result in ignoring one's own bodily needs.

Excesses here lead one to become overly intellectual—living "in the head"—and fosters feelings of superiority, manic-depressive behavior, hysterical behavior, addiction to religion or any fanatic spiritual idea, and dissociation from the body.

When the Seventh Chakra Is Balanced

A balanced sahasrara releases one from ego-driven desires. There are increases in self-trust, selflessness, and superior consciousness, matched by a refined sense of empathy. With an ability to perceive the big picture comes a humanitarian nature. Experiences of inner peace and satisfaction increase, as does the ability to live in the present moment. The macrocosm is comparable to the microcosm—"as above, so below." You experience what is called "crown compassion," the ability to be perceptive and communicative. All chakras begin to balance, and the following occur in the main energy centers:

First Chakra: Groundedness

Second Chakra: Creativity

Third Chakra: Success in the world

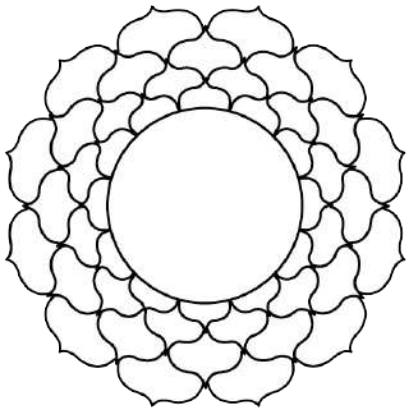
Fourth Chakra: An expansive heart

Fifth Chakra: Expression of your true voice

Sixth Chakra: Connection with inner knowing

Seventh Chakra: The highest state of consciousness [52]

Sahasrara Symbols: The Seventh Chakra Yantra



The symbolism of sahasrara is complicated. Some systems depict sahasrara as linked to a number of secondary chakras, mostly located outside of the crown chakra proper, and still others perceive many of these secondary chakras as parts of sahasrara and located within it. The description that follows describes the symbols and yantra of sahasrara as if it contains most of the secondary functions within it. I have organized it in a way that enables you to move through the chakra from the outermost layer to the inside core in six categories of symbols.

1. Sahasrara has a thousand petals.
2. The yantra contains a circular moon region within a golden pericarp. This moon area shines with brilliant rays and is considered the abode of immortality. It is described as moist and cool like nectar. It is sometimes called the chandra (moon) mandala.
3. A luminous triangle lies inside the moon region. This downward-pointing triangle is called a trikona or trikuta, within which is the circular abode of Shiva.
4. The abode of Shiva, in the form of a circle, is also called the Great Void, the para bindu, the supreme bindu, the parama purusa, the place of harihara, the place of prakriti-purusa (or Shakti-Shiva), shunya, the abode of Vishnu, or the abode of Devi. Once a

practitioner experiences the beauty of this void through the development of kundalini, it is also called nityananda. It is the chief root of liberation and manifests kala with ama-kala, concepts I will describe later. Here dwells Parama-Shiva or the Supreme Lord Shiva who is Brahma and Atman. He is here to unite with Shakti. This void is the main source of never-ending bliss and liberation, is kept secret by the yogis, and can only be understood through long-term and regular yogic practices.

When kundalini reaches the supreme bindu, all the *tattvas,* or principles, as well as their source, or *prakriti*, are absorbed into the supreme bindu. They are now said to be beyond maya, or formless and absolute. What is left is Shiva in union with Shakti, and their infinite powers are condensed into the supreme bindu. The aspirant now experiences complete illumination; awareness becomes superconciousness. There is now absolute bliss, or *satchitananda*. This process only occurs after attaining full control of the mind (*citta*, as described earlier), and it is said that those who reach this place are never again born in the "wandering," the binding world of birth. There is a multiphase process for reaching this ultimate freedom, which I will now describe in more detail.

5. Before dissolving into the bindu and mating with Shiva, the kundalini, or Shakti, expresses herself in four ways, or through four phases, as follows:

As the ama-kala inside the triangle: Here she is the sixteenth kala of the moon. *Kal* means "count" and references the notion of a *kalachakra,* or wheel of time. The core notion is that the goddess appears in phases like the moon; the sixteenth kala is a full moon day and represents the supreme goddess. As the ama-kala or shashi she resembles a young sun, red in color. She is as thin as a hundredth part of a lotus fiber. She is lustrous and soft like ten million lightning flashes. And turned downward, she is the source

of the abundant nectar that comes from the union of Shiva and Shakti.

As the nirvana-kala inside the ama-kala: Here she is known as more excellent than excellent, as subtle as the thousandth part of the end of a hair, and shaped like a crescent moon. She is the eternal goddess who pervades all beings and manifests the power of absorption. She grants divine knowledge and is considered as lustrous as the light of all suns shining simultaneously—or as bright as 10 million suns and as cool as 10 million moons. As the supreme goddess, she abides within the personal god, or *ishtadevata*. She is the seventeenth *niranjana kala*, meaning "without form or stain" or the "unstained crescent moon."

As the nirodhika-fire inside the nirvana-kala: Here we perceive the goddess in superior control or her full power, which is called *nirodhika*. This power is in the form of power, or *vahni*, where sound is unmanifested, or *para nada*.

As the nirvana Shakti reflecting the nirodhika-fire: In her full power, the primordial nirvana Shakti is an all-absorbing kundalini power. She is as red as 10 million morning suns, the mother of three worlds, and the source of the universe as mantra, subtle and secret. She is compared to the 10 millionth part of the end of a hair. She is also aware only of her Lord Shiva, pouring out gladness because of her love for him. As the source of all life and beings, she imparts the knowledge of Brahman to the sages. She is the full embodiment of consciousness without the needs others have and is often pictured as a circle that contains a number of other elements.

6. Note that inside the fully developed nirvana Shakti is the abode or bindu already described (represented by the red dot). Before we can fully enter this abode, we must take the following steps, each of which is linked to an energetic structure.

Passing through the visarga: Above the circular moon region in the crown chakra is the *visarga,* or power bridge. It can be symbolized as two dots after the Sanskrit letter *ah*. In relation to the sahasrara chakra, the visarga bridge starts just above the ama-kala and ends at the supreme bindu. Between these start and stop points forms a bridge of duality, a combination of *aham*, the power of consciousness, and *idam*, a more objective energy, through which kundalini must journey to master oneness. Visually, the visarga bridge is described as shining red, like red lightning. Within it are the essences of the five vital airs or pranas, five deities, and all knowledge. (In some systems the nirvana kala and nirodhika fire lie on the bridge between its lower and upper points.) After passing through the bridge, the kundalini coils three and a half times.

Emergence of Shankhini: In spiral form, after passing through the sahasrara, the kundalini becomes known as Shankhini. She is above the sahasrara and the second dot of the visarga. As supreme knowledge, she is united with Sakalashiva, absorbed into what is known as the polestar region, and merges into the infinity of Paramashiva.

An alternative suggestion: Some systems propose that the *hrit,* or wishing tree (described in chapter 7), lies in the center of sahasrara. In this case, Shakti and Paramashiva are united in sexual union and are one and the same. They are often depicted as Ardhanarishvara.[53]

Sahasrara's Component Parts

Gross Element: This category is not applicable, as the sahasrara chakra is unlimited. Sometimes the *tattva,* or subtle principle here, is called *adi tattva* or *ishvara tattva*, "the source of God." *Adi* means "without beginning," and *anadi* means "without end"; this chakra is therefore infinite.[54]

Subtle Element: None associated

Color of the Element: None associated

Sound of the Element: Visarga (a breathing sound)

Attribute: Nonduality; cosmic consciousness [55]

Sound Carrier: The motion of the bindu, a dot above a crescent

Petals: Sahasrara's lotus is usually pictured as a white lotus with a thousand petals. The lotus is located in the vacant space in which lies the Shankhini nadi, below the visarga power bridge.[56] This space is sometimes called the "supreme ether."

In the oldest of scriptures, this lotus is described as lustrous and whiter than a full moon, with its head turned downward. The petals are often said to be rainbow colored and arranged in twenty layers, each of which is composed of approximately fifty petals. Its clustered filaments are said to be the color of the young sun, and the letters on its body begin with the letter A. Traditionally, nothing is said about the color of the letters on sahasrara's petals, so they are usually considered white and arrayed from right to left.[57]

Each of the thousand petals is linked to a different nadi, connecting to a total of a thousand nadis. All fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet are found on these petals as well as their twenty permutations, or layers.[58] These petals face down in a bell-shaped fashion that is often compared to an umbrella. While they shine white, their filaments are sometimes said to blaze like fire. This is because the bindu of Shiva is white and the bindu of Shakti is red. Their combination is called *kamala*: *ka,* meaning "sun," and *mala,* meaning "emitting both light and sound." The petals are therefore thought to contain all powers, all Sanskrit letters, and all mantras.

According to legend, once kundalini reaches the sahasrara chakra and encounters Lord Shiva, she encircles the Shiva lingam—the bindu or void—like a garland strung with all fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, with the sound *ksha* emanating from her mouth. These letters, the panchashika mala, form the string of mala beads associated with the Shiva-Shakti union. Once Shiva and Shakti are in union, the fifty petals with their letter-mantras radiate

as light beams down to the petals in the first six chakras. In this story, which is taken from the Upanishads, Lord Shiva is called Surya and possesses these thousand rays of light, called *rashmi*. When he unifies with Shakti, she becomes the source of the supreme sound, or the *para nada*. In fact, she becomes so concentrated in the bindu that the three edges of the triangle—represented by the letters A, U, and M—sound in equilibrium, bringing the three gunas into balance. As this occurs, the petals upon which are inscribed the fifty Sanskrit letters burst into song—a series of mantras.

These mantras are recited in two ways: from A to LA, which is called anuloma, but also from LA to A, called viloma. When these ways of sounding occur simultaneously, a hundred mantras are created. Surya (Lord Shiva), in the form of light, now radiates a thousand light beams in a hundred forms, thus forming the sahasrara hundred-petalled nirvana chakra.[59]

Cosmic Realm or Plane

The realm of the seventh chakra is *satya loka,* or truth.

Ruling Goddess

In sahasrara, Shakti manifests as the completion of all her forms. Her final name is Shankhini, which she becomes upon entering sahasrara and the supreme bindu. She is now liberated *(jiva mukti)* and in full ownership of all her powers.[60]

Ruling God

Lord Shiva, who appeared in muladhara as the lord of the animals and in muladhara and in ajña through the Shiva lingam, rules sahasrara. He is also sometimes called Adi Anadi, the Supreme Divine Consciousness and foundation of the Universe, or Parama-Shiva, among other names. In his ultimate role, he represents the uncreated creator of the cosmos (*svayambhu*), bliss (*ananda*), pure consciousness (*purusha*), and liberation (*moksha*). Karma cannot touch him. It is also said that in each individual (*jivatma*), we reside within this supreme form of Shiva. When our individual self reaches Shiva in the sahasrara chakra and merges with him, we are freed from any

shackles or limitations. For more information on Shiva in this chakra, see the "Sahasrara Symbols" section.[61]

Ruling Planet

The seventh chakra's ruling planet is Uranus, the change agent.

Granthi (Knot)

There is no granthi, or kundalini lock, connected to sahasrara.

Intuitive Abilities

Siddhi

Through full initiation into the sahasrara chakra, the yogi enters supraconsciousness and becomes a *jnani*, a wise one. A jnani doesn't look at the world as separate from the self; however, someone in this state will not assume that anything belongs to them—rather, they have overcome the desire to possess or control.[62] While access to all the siddhis is obtained with activation of this energy center—and maybe even during the activation of the ajña—the jnani feels no compulsion to use them, trusting instead to be a reflection of the Divine.[63]

Contemporary Gifts

All of the gifts are accessible at the seventh chakra stage. Those I believe are especially linked with sahasrara include components of astral projection (soul travel while out of body), claircognizance (clear knowing) and all other empathic abilities, exorcism (release of spirits), faith healing, horoscopy (interpreting astrological charts), levitation, precognition (seeing the future), and prophecy (knowing what should happen).

Subtle Body Partners

Related Auric Field And Its Functions

The seventh auric layer is located atop the sixth auric field and is about three feet from the body's surface; it is featured in chapters 20 and 32.

Secondary Chakras

Many of the ancients believed the sahasrara is a stand-alone chakra, a thousand-petalled beauty with indwelling energy centers accomplishing the

final resolution of kundalini's journey. Still others asserted that sahasrara functions because of a kaleidoscope of secondary chakras that enable its performance. Non-Hindu systems—many of which are depicted throughout this book—showcase both ideas, many featuring a set of transpersonal chakras above the head.

In this section we are sampling the secondary chakras most often linked to sahasrara; these are not necessarily the transpersonal chakras found in other systems described in this book, although when they are similar, I will note this fact. For now, I will treat the supportive sahasrara components as if they are all separate but interactive chakras. For a more conjoined viewpoint, see the "Sahasrara Symbols" section.

When we left our discussion of secondary chakras in the last chapter, above the ajña were the manas and indu chakras. In many systems, the indu or soma chakra marks the edge of the ajña. From this point upward, we are going to consider the following system, from bottom to top:

Mahanada: A point sometimes inserted between the indu and the nirvana chakra

Nirvana: A causal chakra located at the top of the skull

Guru: A light-based chakra found in the lower part of sahasrara (either at the top of the skull or above the head)

Supreme Bindu: Sometimes considered above the head or at least in the upper sahasrara [64]

Following are representative descriptions of these chakras:

Mahanada Point: This point is considered the place of great vibration and is counted only in extended tantric arrangements. When pinpointed, it is sometimes affiliated with the thalamus gland and enables mental and psychic performance.[65] It is considered the place where vayu dissolves and half of Shiva is available—the half present in the form of Ardhanarishvara. (The other half is Shakti.) It is shaped like a plough and provides tranquility, grants boons, dispels fear, and manifests

intelligence. When a yogi successfully activates this point, they become accomplished in speech.[66]

Nirvana or Brahmarandhra: The nirvana chakra is a multilayered chakra known by many names, including the brahmarandhra chakra. No matter what it is called, it is always associated with sahasrara. In all cases it is associated with the endpoint of the sushumna and the top of the cranium. First I'll list its many names, which will help you know whether you may have heard of it before.

In the tantric traditions this chakra is called the nirwana, brahmarandbra chakra, bodhini chakra, rodhini, chitkalashakti chakra, shatapatra chakra, shatadala chakra, kala chakra, and the dwadashanta. Additional names added by the Upanishads are the brahmarandhra chakra, parabrahma chakra, dwadashanta, and the shirshantargata mandala. The *Puranas* tradition also includes the names shanta, shantipada, dwadashanta-pada, dwadashanta sarasija, and brahmarandhra pankaja.

The nirvana chakra is found at the upper and ending point of the chitrini nadi in the cranium. (The vajra and Brahma nadis, in addition to the sushumna, also end here.) This means that it has two locations: one at the top of the head, the other at the middle of the head. It has a hundred shining white petals and is the seat of the *dhi,* or concentrated mind, as well as the *ahang*, or "I-ness." Like sahasrara, it is linked with the pineal gland.

At the brahmarandhra, at the rear of the head, is an aperature called the visarga or, more specifically, the bindu visarga. It is located at the top back of the head and is often related to the ajña chakra; yogis often covered it with a tuft of hair. It is sometimes known as the indu, chandra, or soma chakra, although there are differences in these depictions. This bindu, or gateway, links to the brahmarandhra. The word *brahmarandhra*, however, is a combination of two words: *brahma* means "consciousness," and *randhra* means "fissure." It is

therefore considered the "fissure of consciousness" or "hole of Brahman." This center's second location is in the hollow space at the top of the head, or the anterior fontanel, which relates to another of its titles: *thuria*, meaning "highest peak." This is exactly what this chakra is—the highest peak of the body.[67]

The fontanel is often called the baby's soft spot, for that is how it feels—and there are actually two of these. The one at the back of a baby's head is called the posterior fontanel. It is usually smaller than the other and triangular in shape. The one at the very top of the head is the anterior fontanel, and it is larger and diamond or kite shaped. Both are experienced as soft indentations.

The physiological reason for these soft spots is that a baby's head is the largest part of its body; because of this, it can potentially become stuck in the birth canal. Thus the head bones are soft and connected by tissue so the baby can pass through the canal; the head changes shape, allowing the bones to slide over each other. This process is called "moulding." The posterior fontanel closes at about six weeks, but the anterior one—the brahmarandhra—doesn't completely close until eighteen months or so.[68]

Spiritually, brahmarandhra is a main actor in a Hindu story. After Brahma created the physical body, he entered it to illuminate it through this hole. This access point might close up, but Spirit remains inside. At death, yogis separate themselves from the physical body, and brahmarandhra bursts open again. Prana escapes through this opening. The soul now passes through the sushumna, which pierces the head, beyond the body. According to the *Katha Upanishad*, the soul that is able to fully follow the outward flow achieves immortality.[69]

The brahmarandhra chakra is also called *dasamadvara*, or the tenth opening or the tenth door; this name references the yogic belief that there are ten doors into the body. It is frequently considered the home of the soul and the escape hatch for it upon death. The other nine doors are obvious orifices—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, anus,

and sexual organ. These nine orifices link the internal body to the external world. When they are closed, such as through yogic practices or at death, the soul is obliged to go through the tenth door, a door of consciousness. This is how we gain transcendence of the physical self.[70]

Guru: The guru chakra, also called the jnana chakra, is a doorway to the knowledge and guidance of the teacher within. This chakra purifies the mind and steps down higher truths, as is revealed in its name. *Gu* means "darkness," and *ru* means "light." Guru is therefore the light that chases away the darkness of ignorance. It is often located in the middle of the forehead.

This stairway to heaven is often juxtaposed with ajña; they both deal with mental knowledge. The difference is that ajña defers to lower knowledge, while the guru chakra deals with higher knowledge. The term *ajña* includes *a*, which means "without," and *jña*, or "knowledge." It therefore assists those with "little knowledge." The jnana center is the center that processes knowledge inclusive of total reality.[71]

Supreme Bindu: The supreme bindu is sometimes seen as a point above the head, or at the least in the upper sahasrara. The absolute void, it was described in the "Sahastrara Symbols" section.

Let us return to one more approach to sahasrara, one that began in chapter 8 on the vishuddha chakra, was furthered in chapter 9 on ajña, and will be completed here. As is shared among the Tibetans, above ajña can be found the lalana or talata chakra. Lower than this chakra is a secret chakra called the golata, which is at the uvula at the back of the throat. Sahasrara's secondary chakra, according to this system, is called the lalata or forehead chakra. It is located at the crest of the forehead and considered a place of peace and serenity. It is said to lift the yogi to the highest form of consciousness, guaranteeing superhuman powers. With eight bluish-white petals, this chakra is represented by Shiva and the goddess Shakti in erotic embrace.[72] It is frequently associated with the soma chakra described in the previous chapter.

Kundalini Matures: An Overview

Kundalini reaches maturity in sahasrara, moving through each chakra and stage of development to become Shankhini, the supreme kundalini, until she is one with Paramashiva. With kundalini's story now complete, the adept can finally understand the complexity of her entire journey, which we are now going to explore via the keen insights of Susan Shumsky as presented in her book *Exploring Chakras: Awaken Your Untapped Energy*.[73]

As kundalini rises through each chakra, she absorbs the *tattvas,* or principles, of each, as well as the elements and sense objects of each. Often, she reaches a higher step only to fall back down to muladhara—even from sahasrara. Eventually, however, her pathway will involve the following steps:

1. In muladhara (first chakra) she is *kula* or the root kundalini, resting as the svayambhu lingam. Here she takes in earth and smell.
2. When awakened she is *vahni* or fire kundalini, deep red and oscillating, passing through the next two steps toward the anahata.
3. In svadhisthana (second chakra) she takes in water and taste.
4. In manipura (third chakra) she absorbs fire and form.
5. Reaching anahata (fourth chakra), she becomes surya or sun kundalini and is vermillion in color. She remains in this state until she reaches the ajña chakra, after first absorbing air and touch in the heart chakra.
6. In vishuddha (fifth chakra) she takes in ether and sound.
7. Upon reaching ajña (sixth chakra), she transforms into *chandra,* or moon kundalini, white and filled with nectar. She stretches through the secondary chakras associated with ajña: the manas, absorbing *citta,* or sensory mind; then the indu (sometimes called soma or chandra chakra), taking in *buddhi,* or intellect.
8. Entering the realm of sahasrara (seventh chakra), according to some systems she now enters the mahanda between the indu and the next stop, the nirvana chakra, absorbing *dhi,* or higher mind, and

ahamkara. or ego. As moon kundalini she travels through the visarga power bridge to the triangle lying in the nectarous moon of the guru chakra. Here she finalizes a transformation into turya kundalini, the state of extended daily consciousness.

9. She now enters the sahasrara chakra proper, following the path described in the "Sahasrara Symbols" section.
10. Finally she completes her assumption into the bindu point, and enlightenment is reached. She is now Nirvani Shakti and is beyond waking, dreaming, and sleeping.[74]

But now we have to ask: is there an eleventh step?

Modern metaphysicians and a few physicians of the soul are now postulating that a brain organ called the caudate nucleus might play as valid a role in psychic development as the preceding steps, once stimulated following the activation of the pineal gland at the closure of kundalini's climb.

On the physical level, the caudate nucleus is a part of the basal ganglia and plays a role in learning and memory. We actually have two caudate nuclei, C-shaped bodies near the center of the brain and astride the thalamus. Each is located in one of the two hemispheres of the brain.

The left caudate, along with the thalamus, seems to regulate communication skills and tells us how to respond to stimulation. Both caudates help us store memories and transmit worry and concern inside of the brain. At the least, dysfunction in this organ feeds into obsessive compulsive disorder.[75]

Based on psychic information channeled decades ago, a theory has risen that adds to the story. What happens after the pineal gland is activated? As is explained in the esoteric classic *Through the Curtain* by Viola Petitt Neal and Shafica Karagulla, the caudate nucleus now galvanizes millions of "psychic antennae" into action, triggering any and all forms of ESP.[76] These antennae operate like circuits between the hardwiring of the body and the higher forms of knowing.[77]

A handful of scientific studies support this phenomenon. For instance, authors of studies conducted back in the 1960s found that a number of psychic experiences followed the stimulation of the head of the caudate.[78] According to more recent research, the caudate nucleus is where 80 percent of the brain's receptor sites for dopamine, the neurotransmitter that causes euphoria, are found.[79]

And truly, what is the final conclusion of the love story between Shiva and Shakti but euphoric love? According to "believers," humanity once accessed this organ with much familiarity; we have since tuned it out. Perhaps it is time to tune back in.

We have reached our destination in sahasrara, the seventh chakra, the white thousand-petalled lotus that is truly the crown of the chakra system. Known as the center of spirituality, it is linked with the cerebral plexus and the pineal gland and is the center of higher consciousness, governing many bodily functions.

In many ways this chakra is paranormal, not associated with the normal, and so it is sometimes located on the crown of the head and at other times above the head. As it is beyond the everyday in nature, there is no gross element, breath, sense or sense organ, or true action organ, although it is represented by the sound *visarga*, a breathing sound, carried by the motion of the bindu, a dot above a crescent. It helps us achieve nonduality and cosmic consciousness and is linked with the plane of *satya loka,* or truth. Ruled by Shakti in all her forms, known as Shankhini, it is also associated with Lord Shiva and the moon node called Ketu. Activated in adulthood, after the sixth chakra, this chakra enables us to access all the siddhi as need be.

Kundalini is at rest, having taken us through all the seven in-body chakras, but there is still much to do and learn. In part 3 you will plumb the depths of all things chakra medicine, and you can put the knowledge you have gained thus far to work.

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Fundamentals of Chakra Medicine

> I signed aboard this ship to practice medicine, not to have my atoms scattered back and forth across space by this gadget.
>
> Dr. McCoy in Star Trek's "Space Seed" Episode

We are all familiar with modern medicine and its use of drugs, surgery, technology, and bandages to solve our health challenges. These methods are effective and necessary in many cases. Sometimes, however, they leave us feeling like so many "atoms scattered back and forth," wondering if we'll ever get put back together again.

But what are the implications for healing if we embrace the idea that we are made of stardust? Furthermore, what if we acknowledge that we carry our own personalized celestial bodies within us, in the form of the chakras? If this is true, we can jump for joy because we know that chakra medicine can effect positive change at many levels of our being.

As we've explored already in this book, chakras enable us to approach our challenges holistically, from several points of view all at once. We can stargaze at a problem through the telescope of psychology, spirituality, or physicality; from the perspective of the past, present, or potential future; even through the lens of our own divinity. Through—and because of—the chakras, we can attune to a god for spiritual insight, lasso a planetary energy to bolster a dietary supplement, and perform deep breathing to link with our soul.

In this part you'll bring the stars closer to earth, if not right into your own heart. I'll introduce you to the benefits of chakra medicine, as well as its capabilities. I'll then swiftly move into an exploration of easily accessible chakra medicine techniques. These practices are based on the seven basic Hindu chakras, to which you were thoroughly introduced in part 2. (Section 2 will initiate you in other chakra systems from around the world, which will add culture-specific healing techniques.) Covered in this part are tools for chakra assessment and healing that range from drawing on your own intuition to employing ancient yogic techniques and everything in between.

The first part of this presentation is focused on preparation techniques. Many are now considered Western chakra practices, and you might find them somewhat familiar. These methods are divided into two parts: assessment and healing. I will then shift to philosophies and exercises that are more Eastern in orientation. I consider these latter practices fundamental to chakra knowledge, as many originated with the people who harnessed the stars for us all in the first place, drawing chakra wisdom down from the heavens and into everyday life. Finally, I will feature a wide variety of chakra medicine techniques that range from the use of sound to homeopathy—some of the more modern adaptations of ancient chakra medicine.

While there are hundreds of chakra medicine techniques you won't find in this section, those I've included represent the basic categories of chakra medicine. Something they all have in common is that they are both beneficial and universally accessible. All are designed to promote the healthy flow of subtle energy so we may realize our highest potential—body, mind, and soul. May they lead you into the enlightened state you already enjoy deep within.

[contents]

The Benefits of Chakra Medicine

> No problem can be solved from the level
> of consciousness that created it.
>
> Albert Einstein

Chakras make good medicine—*medicine* being defined as any activity that moves us toward health, satisfaction, and harmony. Because chakras are so interwoven with all aspects of our being, any shift we make within a chakra causes exponential transformation. Because chakras are connected to one another, to benefit one is to improve all others. And because chakras are subtle organs with rapidly vibrating energy, when we perform chakra medicine, we can work quickly.

This chapter explores a variety of ways in which chakra medicine can improve your life physically, psychologically, and spiritually. I'll first outline the "chakra consciousness profile," a quick look at the seven main benefits of learning to work with and through your chakras. Then I'll present terms you'll find throughout this book that describe some of the methods for performing chakra healing—terms that appear in "chakra circles" but aren't always explained. These include concepts such as healing, manifesting, ego, true self, opening, balancing, clearing, blocks, attuning, and aligning. These ideas will appear again and again as you continue reading, so it's vital to have a sense of what they mean.

As you will discover, chakra knowledge is critical for anyone who wants to achieve a higher state of consciousness while making significant changes in their own and others' lives. It can achieve the great and the small—and, as the enlightened person knows, there is little difference between the two.

The Far-Reaching Benefits of Chakra Medicine

How does someone who lives a life devoted to chakra medicine look and act? In general, they are balanced in body, mind, and soul. But there are specific benefits that you can expect will follow the application of the chakra knowledge, principles, and medicine I share in this book. As you will see, incorporating chakra work into your daily life will powerfully support you in several ways. With practice, you will:

Increase Clarity: Chakras store your memories. They also store the energies of others, and you must clean out these energies in order to know what you really think, believe, and need in the present.

Clear Out Negative Beliefs and Emotions: Destructive beliefs set you up for negative attitudes, relational problems, lack of prosperity, and emotional havoc. You can also fall prey to harmful emotions such as envy, resentment, hatred, or betrayal, which can cause everything from self-hatred to physical illness.

Clear Out Trauma, Both Psychological and Physical: An unaddressed trauma will continue to occupy and affect you until you deal with it.

Access Insights: Each chakra communicates via a different psychic style and is therefore an avenue for spiritual guidance—something we all need if we are to walk this world in a good way.

Reduce Stress: Between 75 and 90 percent of all doctor's visits result from stress, which leads to everything from physical illness to mood disorders.[1] By bolstering your chakras, you boost your ability to handle whatever life presents you.

Strengthen Immunity and Boundaries on All Levels: Your chakras interact with your auric field—the layers of energy beyond your skin—to provide protection and boundaries. These energetic boundaries, as they are called, enable you to prevent adverse energies from entering your body and to share positive instead of self-defeating messages with the world.

Clear and Keep Out Others' Energies: I believe that up to 80 percent of our problems are caused by the energies of others. Chakras store this energy, but they are also able to release it, and when our energetic boundaries are intact, they can keep it from coming back in.

As you explore these seven main benefits of applying chakra medicine, keep in mind that chakra work can benefit you so greatly because chakras operate inside form and outside it—just as you do. You can't change when you remain trapped inside a problem. When you work with your chakras, you can stretch beyond the problem. You can reach for the skies and find a star to illuminate a new way.

Chakras Increase Clarity

There are numerous reasons you might need to work within the chakras to gain clarity. The main reason the chakras are such powerful vehicles for choice and decision making is that, at a primal level, chakras are organs of storage. Inside each chakra are the memories, traumas, misperceptions, emotions, and misinformed conclusions relating to that chakra's concerns. Unless you release yourself from the stored energy of the past, you can't clearly see the present or plan for the future.

As I mentioned, chakras store more than just your own energy; inside each chakra is also a collection of energies you have collected from others. As I discuss in the upcoming "Why Do We Take In the Energies of Others?" section, it is very common to absorb energy from other people, yet you cannot process energies that do not match your own unique vibrational imprint, and this is why other people's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energy can get trapped in your energy bodies. Once embedded, it clouds your perceptions and causes confusion: the state of being "con-fused," or fused with others. You must release this energy if you are to wholly occupy yourself.

Your own stuck energy, as well as energies you hold for others, can block your meridians and damage your energetic fields, which can become perforated, thickened, or too thin. Clarity is hard to come by when your life

energy isn't moving, is leaking, is being used by someone else—or when you can't access it yourself.

Chakras can also be adversely affected by yet another energetic mechanism: energetic attachments and bindings. We all make a variety of energetic agreements with others that create limitations, loss of energy, or the absorption of their energies. These "contracts"—which exist in the subtle planes but can affect us physically, psychologically, and spiritually—can also link us to otherworldly entities, beings, and groups.

When you release or transform the unsuitable energies your chakras hold, you can attune to yourself and be better able to make decisions based on inner integrity.

Why Do We Take In the Energies of Others?

Many individuals are highly empathic, to the extent that they can pick up on—and even "pick up"—illness, physical pain, addictions, desires, feelings, beliefs, goals, memories, thoughts, perceptions, and even entities and energetic attachments that do not belong to them. As we explored in part 2, every chakra is spiritually oriented to track certain types of psychic information. It might go too far in this endeavor, though, and literally assume the subtle energy into itself. Because subtle energy can translate into physical reality, what is absorbed by subtle means can transform into physical issues affecting the body, mind, or soul.

So here is a pertinent question: why do we absorb others' energies? We usually do so for one of two reasons. The first is love. When we care for other people, we can often take into ourselves energies that are hurting them.

Here's how this can work. Imagine that when you were in the womb, your mother was unhappy. You might have taken on her

subtle energies of despair or depression as a way to alleviate her suffering. Remember, though, that through the transducer effect of the chakras, subtle energy can shift into physical energies. This unhappiness you are hoarding will not vibrationally match your own first chakra energy and can eventually set into motion physical, mental, or emotional disease processes.

The second main reason we absorb others' energies is to create safety for ourselves. Return to the womb and imagine that your dad was a violent alcoholic. Even through the walls of the womb, you can sense his threats of violence. You might unconsciously assume his anger in order to make him less angry—and, therefore, less dangerous. You might then grow up expressing intense anger at others for no apparent reason—without understanding that it's not even your own anger that lashes out. No wonder you can feel like you're "not yourself" when you're raging.

While chakras are the main vehicle for storing others' energies, they are also powerful places to work on releasing these energies, a process we will discuss throughout part 3.

Chakras Clear Out Negative Beliefs and Emotions

Negative beliefs can cause everything from a poor self-image to bad health. Every chakra records a specific set of beliefs, many of which are life enhancing, reflecting and earning goodness, but then again, many of the beliefs loaded into our chakras are destructive.

Substantiating this statement is research on the number of negative beliefs we have each day. Of the 60,000 or so thoughts we have in a day, almost 80 percent are negative.[2] Perhaps even worse, most of these are thoughts we had the day before—and the day before that.

In chapter 13 we will further explore ways to transform these negative beliefs through the chakras; this is one of the most important goals of chakra medicine. Negative thoughts produce negative effects, as was revealed in a

recent study at Oxford University showing that poor expectations of a treatment overrode the expected effects of a powerful pain-relieving drug.[3]

It's equally important to access or substitute positive beliefs or emotions to replace the negative ones. In-depth research by Rolin McCraty through the Institute of HeartMath, has shown that negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, and anxiety, cause increased stress, immune challenges, mood issues, cognitive problems, and other physiological dysfunctions. On the other hand, positive emotions, such as appreciation, love, and compassion, improve our physical and psychological functioning.[4]

Because they store both negative and positive beliefs and emotions, our chakras are ideal vehicles for psychological healing. It's not enough to release negative emotions; we must also open to the positive ones.

Chakras Release Trauma

By the time we reach adulthood, most of us have incurred damage from varying types of traumatic situations. Trauma occurs when we experience distressing or disturbing circumstances, but the effects linger when we are unable to clear or recover from the trauma. It's especially useful to approach trauma from an energetic point of view, since it involves subtle as well as physical energies.

Trauma stems from many causes. These include physical accidents, illnesses, and abuse; addictions or being in relationship with an addict; emotional, mental, or verbal abuse or the witnessing of the same; neglect; exposure to a short- or long-term stressor such as losing a job, the illness or death of a loved one, and more.

There are other sources of trauma beyond those that traditional medicine recognizes. Our soul can carry past-life trauma into this life. We can also be subjected to abuse and attack from other people's or entities' subtle energies, a subject first introduced in the aforementioned section"Why Do We Take In the Energies of Others?"

Our chakras are interdimensional, exist across time, and access energy from all time periods, as well as our own genealogical roots. This means that they

are reservoirs for past lives, this life, ancestral traumas, and even potential future events. They also hold our emotional and mental reactions to all experienced or even potential traumas, psychic attacks, and energetic attachments. Sometimes we can clear a this-life trauma through therapeutic means, but often a this-life trauma mirrors our soul or past-life issues or an ancestor's situation. This is one of the reasons dealing with trauma through a chakra can be so powerful: we can clear all situations and energies related to the trauma at the same time.

The other reason chakra medicine is so effective is that trauma has an enormous subtle energy component. Forces are subtle as well as physical, and the best way to explain how subtle energetic forces endure, and can continue to wound us, is through an illustration.

Imagine a boy threw a runaway baseball that hit you on the head, and as a result you incurred a traumatic brain injury. Examine the situation and you will discover that the baseball shot through the air via an energetic force. When it hit your head, so did that force.

One component of the force can be measured physically, in terms of intensity and vibration, but there are also subtle energies intertwined in the physical force. The subtle force might contain the feelings of the boy who threw the ball or the beliefs of the umpire who was chastising the boy at the time. Maybe the force even carried that boy's history or his love (or dislike) of baseball. All these elements enter your body and continue projecting into it even as the baseball bounces off.

An emotionally charged event, a mean word, the cursory glance: these and all other interactions involve physical and subtle forces that affect your body and can become stored in the correlating chakras. Several subtle-body scenarios are possible when this happens:

- The force travels directly through the body, leaving an entrance and exit wound. You will have problems in both areas and in the chakras pertaining to them.

- The force enters and then gets stuck. You will incur issues at the entrance wound and at the stuck spot, as well as their related chakras.
- The force enters and hits a part of the body (like a bone), a chakra, or an issue-
  infested area, then bounces out of the body in an off-kilter direction. You will have problems in the entrance and exit wounds as well as the place of impact and all related chakras.
- The force bounces off, leaving a problem in an auric field and the related chakra.

As we briefly discussed in chapter 1, chakras enable access to our physical, psychological, and spiritual energies and are therefore ideal working sites for healing trauma. Most of the exercises in Part 3 can be used to resolve trauma through the chakras.

Chakras Access Insight

Every chakra is a psychic center that can communicate with subtle or psychic information using its own particular style. Much as we do using our five physical senses, chakra communication involves receiving, holding, interpreting, and sending energy. Of course, the difference is that our chakras access energy that moves faster than the speed of light and doesn't conform to the clock. This means that every one of your chakras is able to communicate using information from your own and others' pasts, futures, and concurrent time periods.

As a vehicle for insight, each chakra has its own specialty. For instance, the first chakra manages information that is physical in nature. It might "read" another's illness, financial distress, or sexual inclination. It can also send information to provide others with physically related insights. In response to another's bodily pain, this chakra might send physical healing. In reaction to their money woes, it might psychically suggest ways to become more prosperous.

We are born with every one of the core chakra abilities, yet sometimes one chakra is more open than others, or more psychic than its mates. As we mature, it's important to focus our self-development activities, including our use of kundalini, to clear out the chakras and expand our abilities so they work at an optimum level. Over time, they become less "psychic," or open to the subtle energy around us, and more "intuitive," or mindfully managed. Once we've edged closer to self-realization, which the Hindu system calls enlightenment, our abilities transform into full spiritual gifts: the siddhi powers discussed in all Hindu and tantra systems. We will discuss the insight gifts of the chakras much more thoroughly in following chapters.

Chakras Relieve Stress

As I mentioned earlier, stress—our reaction to life events—is one of the main causes of physical issues and conditions, as well as emotional and mental health disorders. Scientists have discovered that when a person encounters a stressor, the body part that first notices the problem passes the signal to the brain, most notably to the hypothalamus and thalamus. The brain alerts our nervous and endocrine systems, and every part of our body responds, turning on our "flight, fight, or freeze" responses. In turn, our heart rate, breathing rate, and metabolism accelerate, our arteries dilate, and our anxiety goes through the roof. We go on "red alert" so we can deal with the presenting stress.

Chronic or repetitive stress perpetuates this condition, causing significant injury, including lowered immune response, increased blood pressure, tension, sleep issues, and emotional and mental distortions. Endure too much chronic stress and you dramatically increase the potential for life-threatening diseases and dysfunctions.[5]

Recall that every major chakra interacts with the nervous system as well as a hormone gland. As well, your nadis (or meridians) flow through every organic system, and your auric layers serve to protect the same biophysical systems. This means that healing through your chakras and other energetic systems can effect physical change as well as subtle change.

And there is yet another dimension: chakras contain your spiritual consciousness, not only a record of events and interactions. Any tension or stressor in your system or life is automatically registered in a chakra, thus potentially calling forth the shift in consciousness necessary to address, confront, or transform the stress. As perceptual filters, chakras hold the "secret of life": the ability to change your perception and therefore bypass or transform your survival reactions. This means that chakra work provides the ultimate balm you need to recover from or reframe stress.

Chakras Strengthen Immunities and Boundaries

Chakras express themselves outward into the world in three main ways, each of which could be defined as an energetic boundary:

- They operate like swirling vortexes that extend beyond your physical body, front and back sides.
- They interact with (and perhaps even form) your auric layers, which compose a major two-way subtle energy filtering system; according to your chakra programs, this system sends out subtle messages, attracting people and situations to you and deflecting energies.
- They engage with and affect your electromagnetic fields—the bodily fields generated from your cells, organs, and overall self.

Stress is linked to our perceptions of what happens within and around us. The people and systems outside us program the information in our chakras, as does our own soul. This information, which also vibrates, instructs our auric and electromagnetic fields as well as our brain in how to handle stressors—but it also tells the world, to some extent, what stressors to throw at us.

This means that shifting our chakra energy can strengthen our physical, psychological, and spiritual selves and other parts of our energetic anatomy so as to provide more permanent protection and better boundaries.

Chakras Clear and Keep Out Others' Energies

It's vital to get to the bottom of the reasons we might capture the energies of other people and to figure out where those energies might be. Chakras hold

the information about both factors.

There are a number of different scenarios that compel us to hold on to others' energies. We might feel like we must do so in order to adapt to our family's system. We might take on the energy of a person, school, culture, race, or religion in order to fit in. We might also absorb another's energy in order to stabilize an unstable situation. For instance, a child in an alcoholic family system, in which one parent is an alcoholic and the other codependent, might take on the addict's anger to reduce the chance that they will drink again or, if drunk, will act cruelly.

It is possible to soak up just about any type of energy, including physical toxins and illnesses, emotions, beliefs, needs, and even goals. This is because these energies always have a subtle component, a fast-moving energy that doesn't stop at walls—or skin. Rather, subtle energy can move through any and all barriers, or at the very least go around the corners. Usually we take on others' energies because it helps us survive and fit in.

Another motive, however, centers on love. We might take on Mother's depression, Dad's physical malady, a sister's pain, a friend's romantic stress, or any other issue because we care about someone and want to spare them pain. One of the reasons we conduct chakra-based healing work is to figure out not only the source of the energy but also the initial reason we unconsciously took it on. To release the reason is to release the energy.

It's important that we never blame ourselves for absorbing energies from others. Quite often, we were trying to cope with a situation that was bigger than we were, one that seemingly presented no other solutions. At other times we might have been "forced," yielding to a sort of energetic bullying from another person. Forgiveness is key in any healing process and certainly in this one.

It's also vital to figure out where the interjected energy lies within and outside of our bodies. Because every chakra regulates a bodily area, working with the chakras is ideal. Chakras also relate to different auric fields; energy can be trapped in fields as well as chakras. By locating the chakra that correlates with the trapped energy, we can use chakra medicine to eradicate

the energy and rebuild the affected parts of our body, chakra, and energy field.

Chakras are also ideal organs for this healing process because each develops at a different age. For instance, the first chakra develops from in utero to six months of age. If a part of the body related to the hips seems affected by another's energy or displays the symptoms of this potential, we know that something might have occurred during these early ages and so we can focus our work there.

Chakra Medicine: Your Lexicon of Terms

Throughout this book, you'll be learning various ways the ancients used chakra knowledge to transform challenges, raise consciousness, address healing needs, and improve relationships. These same wondrous opportunities are available to us today. Toward this end, it's important to understand the terms that will show up relating to chakra medicine or the application of chakra wisdom to improve our lives. Following are a few of these often-seen concepts:

Healing: To heal is to "make whole." It involves recognizing the innate wholeness latent in the body, mind, or soul and calling it forth into the physical world. This process may or may not restore us to a state of perfection or create a state not experienced before, but it will help us shift into greater joy and acceptance. Healing often involves making an issue "disappear" so it no longer occupies us.

Manifesting: To manifest is to bring what we desire (or what the Divine desires for us) into physical existence. From a subtle energy perspective, manifesting involves transforming energy from its subtle state into a physical state.

Ego: This term, often used interchangeably with personality or false self, is the part of us that develops in order to adapt to our external environment. This acquired identity is often a shell infused with subtle energy so as to bring it to life. We might have several ego-based selves,

which could be based in our childhood or past lives. Healing and manifesting often involve gently releasing the subtle energy from these ego selves, much like we would let air out of a balloon, so they don't run our lives anymore.

True Self: Each of us is an immortal spirit, an essential self that comprises our true identity. While our ego selves believe we are separate from the Divine, our true self knows that we are always connected and is therefore able to link with the Divine to perform healing and manifesting. Our chakras contain the germs of our ego selves but also access the entirety of our true self.

The true self is to be distinguished from our soul, which is the part of ourselves that travels across time and space, often reincarnating, to learn about love. Unlike our spirit, or true self, our soul believes itself to be separate from the Divine, as well as its own spirit, and it can therefore incur wounds and need healing. Our mind is like a computer loaded into our soul; it catalogues our beliefs and experiences. While our mind is nonlocal and journeys with our soul, our brain is local and serves as the vehicle through which our mind operates while we are alive.

Opening the Chakras: Energy workers often use the term "opening the chakras" to describe methods for keeping the chakras operational. A closed chakra isn't fully shut but is contracted and therefore not extended as far as it should be beyond the physical body. This will leave it blocked or inhibited by the issues stored within it. (One of the reasons we activate kundalini is to clear these physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually induced blocks.) An open chakra has a wide vortex swing and reaches far into the immaterial universe. It is therefore able to interact interdimensionally.

Unblocking the Chakras: A block is the subtle energy inhibiting the full function of a chakra. By releasing blocks—whether they were imbedded physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually, or are

composed of one's own or another's energies—we free our true self so it can operate through the corresponding chakra. The process of letting go of a block is often called "releasing the block." The other terms often used include "clearing the chakras" or "cleansing the chakras." Both phrases describe the releasing of chakric blocks.

Balancing the Chakras: Balancing a chakra involves putting a chakra into working order. This can involve making sure the front and back side of the chakra mirror each other, that the swing is appropriately wide and circular, and more. Balancing the chakras involves working with multiple chakras to ensure that they are operational and interacting well with each other.

Another phrase for balancing the chakras is "aligning the chakras." This latter phrase emphasizes the need to make sure that there is an appropriate and equal distance between each chakra, that they are flush along the spine, and also that they are each spinning at matching speeds.

Attunements: A chakra attunement involves energetically calling a chakra or all of the chakras into their optimum state. It often involves clearing and balancing the chakras and then activating and amplifying their energies. Some practitioners use the term "charging the chakras" to indicate the addition of subtle energies so a chakra can better operate.

We work with chakras because they link physical and subtle realities. This juxtaposition enables them to transform physical reality and open us to the spiritual realms. As you have learned, the practice of chakra work is called chakra medicine, emphasizing the traditional meaning of medicine as tools that improve our lives at every level—physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Toward this end, chakra practices can increase clarity, clear out negative beliefs and emotions, release trauma, open you to insights, reduce stress, strengthen your immunity and boundaries, and free you from the energies of

others. These invisible organs just might be the most powerful tools for healing we have!

Now that we've fully explored the promises of chakra medicine, let's jump into the deep end of the pool of chakra knowledge and learn how to practice chakra medicine.

[contents]

Chakra Medicine Methods I
PREPARATION AND ANALYSIS

HAPPINESS IS NOT a matter of intensity
but of balance and order
and rhythm and harmony.

THOMAS MERTON

Cultures around the world have created a plethora of chakra medicine techniques for use in healing and manifesting positive change in our lives. These might involve direct interaction with all of the chakras, a few of them, or only one at any given time. In this chapter I will present several ways to work with a chakra or set of chakras, emphasizing issue assessment with a focus on the seven Hindu chakras we explored in Part 2. We will view chakra practices in this chapter and the following one, which emphasizes healing techniques through a Western lens because although these methods are at least partially based on Eastern concepts, they have been refined in the West.

Though my emphasis here is on the traditional Hindu chakras, most of this chapter's practices can be applied to the energy centers featured in other systems as well. Some are quite similar to those found in the Hindu system; the chakra outlines presented by Rudolf Steiner or those used by the Tsalgi are good examples (featured in chapters 32 and 29, respectively). Other classifications require some translation. For instance, the Jewish Kabbalistic sephiroth are both comparable to and dissimilar from the Hindu chakras. As chapter 28 discusses, however, these energy centers are often compared to specific chakras, which means the activities you will read about in this chapter can also be used to enhance sephiroth function. Similarly, in Part 5,

certain types of energetic or acupoints are likened to specific chakras, and the techniques I cover here can bolster these energetic entry points in the same way they benefit the chakras. In a nutshell, the practices you are about to read are universally adaptable to all subtle energy systems.

In many ways, this chapter is a building block for the remainder of Part 3. First you will become familiar with several techniques, each of which can be used to help you safely and effectively perform issue assessments and healing through the chakras. These methods are cross-functional in that they are skeletal in nature—they draw upon the same basic "bones" of chakra healing. You can also use these techniques in tandem with the exercises featured in the following chapters, which add factors such as color and sound to the mix.

The second half of this chapter is aimed at helping you assess what's going on in a chakra. Before you can perform chakra-based healing, you have to first locate the chakras and then evaluate or read the chakric state of affairs. The procedures covered in this chapter will help you do both, thus establishing the baseline you need to become a chakra medicine healer. There are dozens of other methods, but I have found those I present here to be accessible, simple, and powerful—and they will enable you to perform chakra magic for yourself or others. While some of these techniques are modern and others are as old as the hills, they can all serve as instruments of grace and growth.

The Chakra Medicine Building Blocks from A to Z

Several basic techniques can be used in conjunction with many of the chakra practices in this and the next chapter, as well as those sprinkled throughout this book. These include the five steps for grounding, Spirit-to-Spirit, a variety of physical tools, and the use of intuition. Descriptions of each exercise and some of their possible applications follow.

EXERCISE: **The Five Steps for Grounding**

Grounding involves ensuring that you are fully embodying your soul. There are several reasons this embodiment is your optimum state. First,

anyplace your soul is not present becomes an area that something else—or someone else—can occupy. As well, when you fully inhabit your body, you can energetically absorb the natural elements required for a healthy physical and energetic anatomy. You can also release psychic and physical toxins.

Ideally it is best to be grounded all the time, so this is a technique you can benefit from whenever you choose to use it. But for purposes of doing chakra medicine, I heartily recommend conducting these five steps for grounding before conducting any chakra-based exercise. The steps are as follows:

Ground: Sense the full extension of your soul from the top of your head to the bottoms of your feet—and beyond. Take in the natural elements your body needs. (The elements represented in the cultures I've studied are earth, air, fire, water, metal, wood, stone, light, ether, and star, the latter being a combination of fire and ether.) You can do this by picturing something that represents the desired element, such as a waterfall for water or a tree for wood, and imagining it sharing its energy with you. You can ask that the elemental energy simply pass from nature into your body, perhaps starting under your feet and moving upward. Or simply ask the planet to send whatever element you need into your body.

Center: Establish yourself in your internal meeting ground—the place in your body where you feel whole. The most common sites are the heart and the solar plexus.

Protect: The electrical, magnetic, EMF, and auric bodies around your skin emanate from your organs, chakras, and meridians. Allow your inner spirit to clear and repair these boundaries and establish those necessary for your next endeavor.

Open: Open the front and back sides of your chakras to whatever level is safe; your energetic boundaries will surround the most vulnerable parts of your chakras.

Close: Once you are done performing whichever chakra healing method you have selected, reverse the procedures you conducted to open your chakras. Ask your inner spirit, the Divine, to close your chakras to a safe level, reestablish the correct energetic protection needed for forward movement, center, and ground once again.

EXERCISE: **Spirit-to-Spirit**

Spirit-to-Spirit is a three-part process for directly connecting with the greater Spirit, called by whatever name you use to describe the Divine: your inner spirit, the Holy Spirit, God, Kwan Yin, Christ, the Goddess, Allah, Ganesh, a higher power, or anything else that is meaningful to you. This link to the Divine ensures that anything you do when performing chakra medicine will be accomplished with spiritual boundaries and for the highest good. I describe these three steps here so you can use them before doing any chakra practice. (You can use them either before or after doing the preceding grounding exercise.)

1. Affirm that you are a spiritual being and that your core essence is love.
2. Affirm the presence of the other spiritual beings involved in your endeavor. This might include another person participating in chakra work, a friend, a group, or, if you are alone, the presence of your invisible spiritual helpers.
3. Call upon the presence of the greater Spirit, and surrender to it. Allow this higher presence to instruct, guide, teach, heal, protect, and help with whatever you are focusing on.

As you will find, Spirit-to-Spirit has nearly universal application. You can use these three steps in preparion for meditating, working on your chakras, or even participating in a professional event. I encourage you to use Spirit-to-Spirit before performing all of the techniques covered here in part 3 and in exercises sprinkled throughout this book.

Physical Tools for Chakra Medicine

Chakra medicine incorporates three primary tools: a pendulum, applied kinesiology, and hands-on practices. Following are brief descriptions of how these techniques work.

The Pendulum

A pendulum is a weight suspended from a string or chain. A gemstone is often used as a weight, but any object with a little heft will work. The pendulum is an excellent tool for detecting the energy swings of chakras in both the front and back side of the body. It can therefore help us locate the chakras as well as assist with the analysis of issues.

As you've been learning, the various lotuses associated with each chakra are symbols representing their electromagnetic spin, which they do in a pattern much like a vortex. When it is dangled within a chakra's spin, a pendulum will move accordingly. It will not flow outside of the chakra's energetic sphere, so when you gain movement, you will know you have located a chakra.

A pendulum can swing in several directions, all related to what is occurring with a chakra: clockwise, counterclockwise, vertically, and horizontally. The pendulum might also stop if the chakra is blocked or "turned off." The arc of the swing is usually a full circle, but it can flow in a tight or wide circumference and anything in between. Sometimes a pendulum won't complete a full circle. At other times it will shift directions or start and stop—maybe even stop completely, even after it has been swinging.

In my twelve-chakra system, I suggest that each chakra consists of two wheels. The outer wheel reflects our soul and family programs, patterns, and mental beliefs. A pendulum most frequently measures the outer wheel, which is composed of subtle but verifiable electromagnetic energy. The inner wheel is spun from pure subtle energy and is hard to detect with a pendulum.

Exercise: **Finding Chakras with a Pendulum**

Following are steps you can take to find a chakra on another person by using a pendulum. You can use the same process on yourself with chakras you can easily reach, such as the secondary chakras in the

palms of your hands and your heart chakra. Here is how to find the chakras using a pendulum.

If you're working on someone else, ask them to lie flat. To find a front-side chakra, ask the subject to lie on their back (for the back sides, lie facedown). Stand over the person and hold the pendulum about six inches over the potential location of a chakra. Hold the cord still. Slightly move the pendulum around until it begins to move of its own accord. You can find primary or secondary chakras that are under the feet, over the head, or elsewhere by holding the pendulum at the appropriate sites.

To find your palm chakras, hold the pendulum between two and six inches above your palm. Move it slightly until it begins to swing. You can do the same with your heart chakra by holding the pendulum in front of your chest a few inches away until it begins to swing.

Applied Kinesiology

Also called muscle testing, applied kinesiology makes use of the body's instinctive response to healthy rather than compromising energies to help you gain yes and no answers. There are two basic ways to use this technique: with another person and for yourself.

The theory behind applied kinesiology is that a variety of stressors—including foods, emotions, people, situations, and beliefs—compromise our muscles and make them weak. Conversely, whatever supports us strengthens our muscles. Applied kinesiology will be featured in the following sections as a way to locate and evaluate the chakras as well as to test our healing efforts.

Exercise: **Establishing a Polarity Baseline Using Muscle Testing**

In order to establish a baseline for a yes and a no with another person—a critical aspect of using muscle testing—ask your subject to stand or sit and hold an arm straight out to the side. Evaluate the person's "polarity"—the direction of their natural energy flow—by first making a statement that should merit a yes response. For instance, you might

state the person's name, gender, or age. Now lightly push down on your subject's arm.

Most people's arms will remain strong and inflexible as you push. If this is the case, make an announcement that should merit a no. Tell a woman named Betty that her name is Frank, for example. If the arm's resistance to your light pressure weakens, you should now have established a definite response to positive and negative. In other words, for most individuals, a weak response is a no and a strong response is a yes.

If your subject's arm sinks when you make a correct statement, this person might be a *heyoke*: a Lakota word for someone who acts as the "sacred clown" or does everything in reverse. A heyoke's polarity flows opposite the norm, so their yes is indicated by muscle weakness and their no by muscle strength. Continue making declarations, both accurate and inaccurate ones, until you know for certain that this person is indeed a heyoke.

You can use two fingers to use applied kinesiology on yourself. Place the tips of your index finger and thumb together on the same hand, forming a circle. We'll call this hand A. This position is equivalent to holding out your arm. Now create the same thumb-and-index-finger circle with your other hand, hand B, open it slightly so you can insert it inside the circle formed by hand A, and close it again. You now have two circles firmly interlaced like the links of a chain. Make a statement you know is true—such as your name, age, or gender—and try to push the circle on hand A open. For most people this sphere will resist opening, indicating muscular strength. Now make an incorrect statement; in most cases, the formation in hand A will collapse. If you are heyoke, the opposite will occur.

If your fingers remain in place, your system might be blocking you from accessing information this way. Unconsciously, you might distrust the procedure or prefer to obtain insight in a different way. A less kinesthetic person might use verbal or visual means of gathering

data, such as asking for intuitive messages or visions. You might establish a yes and no but ask a question and find your fingers frozen in place. When this occurs, your question might be confusing to your energetic system or might be getting blocked by your spirit, which doesn't want you to receive an answer. In the latter case, ask if you can request information about a specific topic; if you get a yes, ask a different question than you did at first.

Hands-On Interaction

The term "hands-on" stems from the age-old concept of faith healing, or spiritual healing, that entails placing the hands on or near the body to promote transformation. In chakra medicine the hands are comparable to healing "wands," through which we can both sense the location and flow of chakra energy and move energy. To use your hands for these purposes, it's helpful to first figure out which is your sending versus receiving hand.

Your sending hand pours energy into others; through it you can also share energy with yourself. Your receiving hand absorbs energy from outside yourself. Usually your dominant hand is the sender and your recessive hand is the receiver, but for some people the opposite is true. Both hands can send and receive but there is typically a natural preference.

Exercise: **Establishing Your Sending and Receiving Hands**

To figure out which hand is which, shake your hands as if flicking off water, take a few deep breaths, and rub your hands together. This opens up the palms of your hands. Now separate your hands about two inches from each other, palms facing, and sense the energy generated between your hands. Select a hand and imagine yourself sending energy from that hand into the other, then evaluate that flow for intensity of sensation and ease of sending energy. Now do the opposite. You will instinctively sense which hand best directs energy and which best accepts it.

The Intuition Building Block

Chakra medicine often involves accessing intuition: the process of communicating via subtle energy. I introduced this topic in Part 2 when I listed the contemporary intuitive gifts and the Hindu siddhi associated with each chakra. While intuition involves psychic phenomena, the recognition of intuitive messages is accomplished through our physical body, which interprets extrasensory information through our ability to feel, sense, know, hear, and see.

As you have seen, the list of intuitive abilities of which we are capable is lengthy, but it can be categorized within four intuitive styles. We are typically stronger in one style than another (although some people excel at many or all forms of intuition). It's helpful to know your style so you can use it when you perform chakra medicine.

It's also helpful to know your style if you struggle with one of many issues associated with intuition. Many people are underintuitive, functioning at less than optimum psychic strength. Others are overintuitive, meaning they take in too much psychic data. Another challenge involves distinguishing intuition from fears, fantasies, or figments of the imagination. I have already offered my "one size fits all" solution for all of these states: you can conduct the Spirit-to-Spirit exercise anytime you want to access your intuition. It is a very powerful technique that will enliven your natural intuitive tendencies, provide energetic boundaries if you feel constantly barraged, and help you discern intuitive fact from imaginative fiction.

As you review the following four intuitive styles, know that intuition isn't something to be held in reserve for chakra medicine. Using your intuitive abilities is a way of living.

The Four Intuitive Styles

Of the four main styles of intuition, two are kinesthetic, meaning they are primarily felt in the body and constitute a form of empathy. For this reason I will sometimes refer to these abilities interchangeably as physical and spiritual intuition or physical and spiritual empathy. The second two could be described as more mental, and they entail verbal and visual intuition. Pay

attention to the style at which you feel you excel; this is the one that is most available to you when performing chakra medicine.

Physical Intuition

Physical intuitives sense or feel subtle energy as if it is physical energy. They are highly empathic and can display any of the following gifts:

Physical Empathy: Intuitively reading what is occurring outside of the self through taste, touch, smell, or another physical sensation.

Feeling Empathy: Intuitively sensing others' feelings as if they are one's own.

Mental Empathy: Cognitively knowing others' thoughts or beliefs as if they are one's own.

Relational Empathy: Sensing what is occurring in someone else's heart, with a focus on matters of love and relationship. This is highly tied to the ability to perform subtle healing.

Natural Empathy: Sensing what is occurring in nature and all natural beings.

Force Empathy: Sensing what is happening with natural as well as supernatural forces.

Spiritual Intuition

Spiritual intuitives read or comprehend subtle energy through various forms of spiritual knowing, including the following:

Prophecy: Reading a situation as if through the heart of the Divine.

Shamanism: Use of all mystical senses, including the other three intuitive styles, to gather or disseminate subtle energy.

The main difference between physical and spiritual intuitives is that people who are physically oriented gain all intuition through the five senses. Spiritual intuitives sense information in their bodies that originates from a place of consciousness or awareness.

Verbal Intuition

The verbally gifted hear words, tones, or spiritual guidance; they might also write, sing, or use some other auditory or musical medium to receive or share intuitive information.

Visual Intuition

The visual intuitive receives (and/or sends) psychic images. These can come in the form of visions or pictures; be perceived as colors, shapes, or even slideshows; and be available through nightly dreams, daydreams, and in everyday life.

Locating the Chakras

The first action step in chakra medicine is locating the chakras, either a particular one you wish to work with or all of them and on another's body or your own. There are several ways to accomplish this goal, the simplest of which is to select a chakra system that makes sense to you. This book presents you with dozens of chakra systems; select whichever one you feel drawn toward.

In a previous exercise I described how to locate chakras using a pendulum. Here I will outline how to adapt what you have just learned about applied kinesiology, hands-on interaction, and intuition to locate the chakras. You can use all of these methods on the front or back side of the chakra.

EXERCISE: **Locating Chakras with Applied Kinesiology**

Having already established a yes and a no response on another person, indicating their response to true and false statements, place your hand on or just over an area that correlates to a chakra. Now make the statement "This is chakra number ___" (using the system of your choice). Continue to move your hands around until you are able to find that chakra, and repeat until you discover all the chakras you are seeking.

How do you locate your own chakras? Touch, think about, or label a part of your body where you think a chakra is likely found. Now use

hand kinesiology (using circles with your index fingers and thumbs) to discover whether you have found the location of a chakra or not.

EXERCISE: **Locating Chakras with Hands-On Interaction**

To locate a chakra using your hands—which is easiest done on someone else—flick your hands, rub them together, and create an energy flow between your palms. If you often absorb other people's energies, you might consider sending and receiving energy through the energy field that surrounds your hands rather than through your hands.

Now hold your receiving hand about six inches above a potential chakra site and move it around in gentle circles until you sense a strong pulse of energy emanating from the body. The most intense area marks the center of the chakra. You can double-check your findings by next holding your sending hand over this same area. Pulse energy toward the area you are testing to see if you meet resistance, slightly bouncing your hand up and down. The area of greatest resistance points to the center of the chakra. When you are through with this exercise, flick your hands in the air again, away from the subject's body, and brush your hands against each other. This returns your own system to balance.

You can find your own chakras in the same way, but only those you can reach on the front of your body.

EXERCISE: **Locating Chakras Intuitively**

It's often necessary to locate a chakra intuitively, drawing on your own intuition or guiding another to use theirs. The following steps access the four forms of intuition to detect the chakras. Each choice can be engaged after opening psychically via Spirit-to-Spirit.

- **For the Physical Intuitive:** Ask to safely sense in your own body where the chakras are (even if they are in someone else).
- **For the Spiritual Intuitive:** Ask for guidance to align with spiritual wisdom and know where the chakras are located.

For the Verbal Intuitive: Ask for a higher guide to help you hear the tones of the chakras or tell you where they are.

For the Visual Intuitive: Ask to receive an image or set of pictures to pinpoint the chakras.

Evaluating Issues Through the Chakras

There are many ways to use chakra medicine to evaluate the physical, emotional, mental, relational, and spiritual causes of presenting problems. Any problem or condition that intrudes on your full potential is called a block, a concept further explained in the next section. You can also mine the chakras to uncover the power you need to become intuitively informed in order to actualize your dreams and goals.

Most frequently, an issue can be tracked back to a single chakra that reflects its originating cause. Sometimes there is another chakra that mirrors this causal block or holds its pertinent issues, and it will be important to mine that chakra as well. Typically, however, once you deal with the fundamental misperceptions, traumas, emotions, or other dysfunction in the causal chakra, the others will follow suit.

Before you can heal an issue or unearth a gem hidden within a chakra, you have to determine which is the causal chakra and analyze it for blocks. This section showcases a few ways to do this.

Backgrounder: A Word About Blocks

One of the most common words used in chakra medicine is *block*. Before we can clear, cleanse, heal, or align our chakras, we must rid them of issues, or blocks.

From a subtle energy point of view, the typical block is congested energy, or a buildup of stuck energy. This extra energy can be composed of physical microbes or inflammation, repressed or stuck feelings, dysfunctional beliefs, and other people's energies, as well as myriad other factors; at times the

block can also stem from missing energy. In terms of transformation, we basically want to release the congested energy and appropriately fill in empty or undefined areas. Either way, there are times when we need to probe the underlying factors of a chakra block in order to fully clear the injured chakras and invite balance.

It's helpful to think of the "extra energy" block as a knot, much like the granthi associated with the Hindu chakras. The knot prevents the full flow of subtle and physical energies, and we must untie it, discharging the stuck energy, to invite a restorative flow. Most blocks start with a program (an unhelpful idea) that creates a pattern, a dysfunctional and repetitive response. For instance, sexual abuse might lock in the program or belief that intimacy is dangerous. Most likely this program becomes wedged in the first chakra, which governs raw sexuality and security issues. The resulting pattern could appear as resistance to romantic relationships and subsequent loneliness.

When a pattern becomes resistant to change, it turns into a stronghold. A stronghold is exactly that: a fortification against attack. We want strongholds for imperative reasons, such as to refuse abusiveness or poor treatment. The problem is that most strongholds actually produce the opposite of the intention because they are based on dysfunctional ideas.

For example, picture a family that has been persecuted for religious purposes, to the extent of losing family members to violence. The trauma affects the familial first chakra, which relates to safety, as well as the seventh chakra, which governs spirituality. The familial program now becomes "our religion is right and others' religions are wrong." The pattern might result in committing violent acts against the "enemy," the idea being to strike before being stricken. This entrenched behavior now becomes a stronghold affecting all family members. Ironically,

instead of preserving the tenets of the religion or creating safety and closeness among a spiritual community, the stronghold endangers the very people who are stuck in it; they will now be perceived as arrogant and dangerous and may therefore be victimized even further.

There are five basic types of strongholds. Knowing these can help you determine the fundamental cause of a chakra block.

1. Feeling-Based Stronghold

Our feelings are our emotional reactions to events, involving a complex interaction between biochemistry, memory, and beliefs. There are five basic feelings (fear, anger, sadness, happiness, and disgust), all of which can become repressed or stuck. We can also fail to respond to a situation with appropriate feelings, thereby creating a block that is about lack rather than excess. When feelings are missing, we can become detached or unemotional, display low affect (expression of emotion), lack empathy, and even develop various types of personality disorders or psychoses.

For purposes of understanding our feeling-based or emotional strongholds, there are five constellations of feelings to consider, each of which presents us with a message. These are fear, which indicates we are in danger and need to respond to keep ourselves or another safe; anger, which suggests a boundary violation and the need to establish a boundary; sadness, which reveals a loss and the need to restore love to an area of life; happiness, which tells us we want more of what (or who) is creating happiness; and disgust, which tells us something or someone is bad for us. Related to disgust are feelings including guilt—a version of self-disgust that tells us to shift our attitude or our behavior—and shame or blame, negative sensations that are actually more beliefs than feelings. Shame is the state of thinking there is

something inherently wrong with us, while blame asserts there is something innately wrong with another.

Some scientists now theorize that pain is a sixth category of feeling.

2. Belief-Based Stronghold

A belief is a proposition that we accept as true. We need beliefs; how many of us would go to bed at night if we didn't believe the sun would rise in the morning? But there are six categories of dysfunctional beliefs, which we might subconsciously conclude are true but are always false. They are that we:

- are worthless
- are undeserving
- lack value
- are powerless
- are bad or evil
- are unwanted

All negative beliefs reduce to the conviction of being separate—from parts of the self, others, or the Divine. Conversely, the healing for every negative belief is embracing connectedness. (See the "Beliefs and Your Chakra Anatomy" section in chapter 13 for further clues.)

3. Emotional Stronghold

An emotion is a belief partnered with a feeling. There are innumerable emotional constellations. For instance, three beliefs can be linked with one feeling or ten feelings with one belief. Emotional strongholds can be helpful; for example, if we were once stung by a bee and nearly died from an allergic reaction, we now want to avoid bees. The belief "bees are dangerous" conjoined with a feeling of fear might save our life at some future

point. But what if we partner the feeling of anger with the thought "all women hate me"? That's the formula for misogyny.

4. Physical Stronghold

Physical strongholds mainly lock into the lower and more physically dense chakras and link a physical reaction or sensation to a feeling, belief, or emotion. These strongholds commonly occur following injury, wounding, or illness. For instance, let's say someone endured a painful car accident, was hit on the head, and lost a loved one. Now every time they see a quickly moving car (a reminder of the accident) or get close to someone (a reminder of the loss of a loved one), they might experience a phantom pain, reminding them that cars are dangerous—as could be intimacy with someone. Neither of these are beneficial strongholds.

5. Spiritual Stronghold

These strongholds involve beliefs related to our relationship with the Divine or our Higher Power and basically our sense of being lovable and deserving of unconditional grace. Conversely, negative spiritual strongholds can alter our ability to receive love, grace, and goodness and find value and meaning in life. The other effect of spiritual strongholds is the attraction of otherworldly entities, curses, attachments, adverse group energies, and the like. A quick overview of these spiritual energies, which are often called interference because they interfere with our spiritual pursuits, follows:

Types of Negative Spiritual Beings: Entities are disembodied souls that prey on the living; ghosts are souls that remain on the earth plane, usually to complete a life task; ancestral hauntings are ancestors who continue to adversely affect their lineage; a group consciousness is a network of entities, often controlled by a leader, that convinces the living of a falsity or

leads them into violence or darkness. Entities or group networks can come from various realms, including those of nature, dimensional planes, humans, angels, and masters.

Types of Energetic Attachments: Entities link with us primarily through attachments, as can people. Energetic attachments are energy tubules that are based on a contractual arrangement. The main attachments are cords through which energy is exchanged and that intuitively resemble wires. Life energy cords link a person with a part of their soul, which might be stuck in a different lifetime or outside of the body. Codependent contracts are cords that cause a person to lose energy and take in the toxic energy of others. Curses are dark filaments passed among many people that enact a negative wish. Energy markers, which look like an X, constitute a program that tells others to mistreat the person who has the marker. Holds are energy restraints that keep a part of one's life dysfunctional.Miasms are energetic fields that surround a group of souls, such as family members, and create patterns. Filaments are energy strands that make someone susceptible to negative influences from different dimensions or consciousness groups. Implants, which began as electrical or technological control mechanisms in one life, may transfer as energetic implants in later lives.

Chakra Assessment Using a Chakra Chart

While intuition is an important tool in chakra medicine, logic can go a long way toward pinpointing a blocked chakra. The easiest way to track an issue to a chakra is to analyze the symptoms and relate them to the chakra that governs those predominant themes. For instance, imagine that you are dealing with a problem in the hip. This area is managed by the first chakra. What if you are struggling with financial issues? The first chakra also

regulates these, as well as all other safety and security concerns. By pinpointing the originating chakra, you can work holistically on your problem. That hip flexor pain, for instance, can now be examined from the perspective of beliefs about safety, primal emotions, and family of origin perspectives, which are all the province of the first chakra.

It can also be helpful to track a chakra to its developmental or activation time period, a concept covered in Part 2, with summaries of three different theories about developmental time periods for each Hindu chakra. (We will look at this again in chapter 32 in relation to my twelve-chakra system.) All chakras are active all of the time, but when they are predominant, they busily download energy from the environment, which helps them decide how to function. Emotions, beliefs, and personality traits become locked during the chakra's active developmental stage.

You can use this information in two ways. First, if you recall the incident that caused a chakra block and the time period involved, you can work on the correlated chakra. Second, if you figure out which chakra is blocked, you can begin your healing work by examining what occurred during the related period of a person's life.

For a more in-depth chakra assessment, once you have tracked symptoms to a chakra area, you can ask questions of yourself or another person that relate to that chakra. The answers can help you determine the nature of the block (emotional, mental, physical, or spiritual, for example) and what might have caused it. Questions can include: Why did this issue develop? What was happening during the chakric activation period, and what effects did it leave? What beliefs, feelings, or perspectives are causing a chakra to misfire? Is there a microbial component to this issue or some other physical condition creating a negative effect? As assessment often involves not only pinpointing the main chakra involved in a presenting problem but digging to the root of the issue as well.

Sometimes we're looking for a positive rather than a negative assessment. Imagine that instead of searching for the cause of a challenge, you want to pinpoint the chakra that might enable an expansion of gifts, abundance,

emotional health, or spiritual well-being. The process of figuring out which chakra to focus on is the same as I have described except that you create a "wish list" instead of an outline of problems. Cull your wish list until it is finely honed to a theme. If nearly everything you or someone else is seeking involves love, focus on the heart chakra. If what really matters is spirituality, concentrate on the seventh chakra. Use the following chakra medicine "cheat sheet" and ask questions to further determine how this chakra could be opened to provide greater service.

The Chakra Medicine "Cheat Sheet"

There are dozens of chakra systems in this book. This is a short "cheat sheet" you can use throughout part 3 to help you quickly access the information in these chapters. It features the traditional seven Hindu chakras as well as the five additional chakras I include in my twelve-chakra system. It also references the chakra activation time periods from my own system, which are similar to Anodea Judith's, as you may have noted when we discussed the Hindu chakras in depth in Part 2.

Chakra/Color	Location	Issues Managed	Activation Dates
First/Red	Hips	Safety and security	Womb to 6 months
	Presenting issues: Hips, sacrum, rectum, anus, and coccygeal vertebrae problems; inflammation; intense body tension; fear-based issues; safety and security issues; major addictions; sexual and money issues. Physical empathy gifts lie in this chakra.		
Second/Orange	Abdomen	Creativity and feelings	6 months to 2.5 years
	Presenting issues: Lower intestines, uterus, testes, ovaries, sacral and some lumbar vertebrae problems, as well as general abdominal cavity and "itis" issues, such as diverticulitis; repressed emotions; creativity desires or blocks; desires for sensuality and expression. Feeling empathy gifts are available in this energy center.		
Third/Yellow	Solar Plexus		2.5 to 4.5 years

		Belief system and willpower	
	Presenting issues: Digestive issues, lumbar and some thoracic vertebrae problems; dysfunctional beliefs in general; work and self-esteem issues. Mental empathy lies in this chakra.		
Fourth/Green	Chest	Love and relationships	4.5 to 6.5 years
	Presenting issues: Heart, chest, lungs, ribs, breasts, shoulders, arms, and thoracic vertebrae problems; issues with love and relationships. Healing abilities lie within this chakra.		
Fifth/Blue	Throat	Communication	6.5 to 8.5 years
	Presenting issues: Throat, larynx, mouth, jaw, teeth, and cervical vertebrae issues; expression and communication problems. Verbal psychic gifts are inherent in this chakra.		
Sixth/Purple	Forehead	Vision, self-identity	8.5 to 14 years
	Presenting issues: Eye and pituitary problems; self-identity challenges. Clairvoyance and strategic functions are linked to this chakra.		
Seventh/White	Top of head	Spirituality, purpose	14 to 21 years
	Presenting issues: Higher learning, anxiety, depression, and pineal gland issues; entity attachment issues; center of spirituality. Gifts of prophecy and spirituality lie within this chakra.		
The five chakras beyond the traditional Hindu seven are as follows:			
Eighth/Black	Over the head	Mysticism, shamanism	21 to 28 years
	Presenting issues: Thymus and autoimmune issues; challenges with time, karma, and entities. All shamanic gifts are present in this chakra.		
Ninth/Gold	Over the eighth	Idealism, harmony	28 to 35 years
	Presenting issues: Diaphragm and breathing issues; challenges with being overly idealistic. The spiritual gift of achieving harmony lies in this chakra.		
Tenth/Brown	Under the feet	Link to nature, ancestors	Preconception; also 35 to 42 years
	Presenting issues: Problems with bones and feet; allergies to inorganic substances and genetic issues; challenges with nature, such as reactions to earth or planetary shifts. Inherent is the gift of relating to nature.		
Eleventh/Pink	Around the body	Commanding of forces	42 to 49 years
	Presenting issues: Connective tissue, hands, and feet problems; difficulties with power and self-leadership. Links with ability to command natural and		

	supernatural forces.		
Twelfth/Clear	Around the eleventh	Unique to each person	49 to 56 years
	Presenting issues: Unique to the individual.		

Assessing Chakra Health with Pendulum Testing

Many people conduct an initial assessment of a chakra's health by tracking the swing of a pendulum, a concept I introduced earlier in this chapter. In general, here is what the following swings might indicate:

Clockwise: This chakra is balanced.

Counterclockwise: This chakra is releasing energy or could be losing energy.

Even Pace with a Smooth, Fairly Wide Swing: This chakra is healthy and open.

Too Wide: This chakra is too open and, most likely, taking in too much information.

Stops: This chakra is picking up on a threat and consequently is closed.

Uneven, Disturbed, or Tight: This chakra can't decide whether to be open or closed.

Mainly Vertical: This chakra is reflecting its spiritual potential but lacks practical application.

Mainly Horizontal: This chakra is focused on its practical functions but is overlooking a spiritual perspective.

Swings Toward the Upper Right (Feminine) Side of the Body: This chakra is overemphasizing masculine concerns and requires a feminine perspective.

Swings Toward the Upper Left (Masculine) Side of the Body: This chakra is overemphasizing feminine concerns and requires a masculine perspective.

Too Fast and to the Right: This chakra is reflecting anxiety, or fear of the future.

Too Slowly and Counterclockwise: This chakra reflects a depressed state or an issue mired in the past.

As with applied kinesiology, there is a caveat to the interpretation of clockwise versus counterclockwise spins. I have found that the chakras of about 90 percent of all people are healthy when spinning clockwise. However, about 10 percent of individuals fit the Lakota term *heyoke* and move in reverse. These individuals balance the rest of us, providing a contrarian perspective. Their chakras do the same, often spinning counterclockwise.

EXERCISE: **Testing for Chakra Spin with a Pendulum**

To test someone's natural chakra spin, first find a chakra. I prefer working with the heart chakra, which is the strongest. Now state the other person's name (or your own, if you are self-assessing). The chakra spin will flow in the direction most appropriate. For instance, a heyoke's chakra will swing counterclockwise, while the majority of individuals will watch the pendulum swing clockwise. You can perform this procedure several times on many chakras, using obvious yes and no questions until you are sure about chakra flow.

EXERCISE: **Assessing with Applied Kinesiology**

You can use applied kinesiology to assess a causal chakra (the chakra in which the problem originated) and the issues within it. The method is basically the same as you use when locating a chakra. If you are testing another person, establish a yes and a no. Zoom in on the problematic chakra by lightly pushing on the other's arm while asking questions such as "Is this primarily a first (or other) chakra issue?" You can also put one of your hands on or over the chakra if you can reach it. Once you've centered on the core chakra, ask questions of the body to pinpoint the fundamental issues.

To evaluate your own chakras, use the hand kinesiology method introduced earlier and follow the same format you would use when testing someone else.

EXERCISE: **Assessing with Hands-On Interaction**

The hands-on method is most useful for figuring out someone else's causal chakra and contributing issues rather than your own. It is easiest to perform with the subject lying down on their side; you can evaluate both the front- and back-side chakras this way. Typically the pivotal chakra is affected on both the front and back side, but sometimes the front of one chakra and the back side of a different chakra are the problem. If this is the case, you'll want to evaluate the reasons why.

To conduct a hands-on assessment, which will mainly provide a cursory assessment of challenges, stand over the other person and hold both of your hands about six inches above each chakra site. (Some people prefer to use only their receptive or dominant hand or exchange one for the other.) Slowly wave your hands over a chakra area and evaluate for the energetic issues explained in the list that follows. If you want to, you can use your receiving hand to reveal the energetic landscape of the chakra's generative energy and use your sending hand to double-check your findings. The most disturbed chakra will be the most errant.

The meanings of your energetic findings are as follows:

A Slight Circular Movement that Seems Pleasant: If the chakra area is smooth and moves evenly, with no obvious hills or valleys, it is most likely balanced.

A Dip: A plunge in the chakra site indicates that energy is missing or repressed.

A Bulge: A protuberance suggests that extra energy is impeding the health of this chakra. This energy might be your own, in the form of stored emotions, or composed of others' energies. A bulge can also exist at the site of an attachment.

Tingling: Often indicates the site of necessary change—and that this chakra is willing to be shifted or transformed.

Cold: Occurs where energy is missing, repressed, or has been stolen. Can also indicate energetic attachments or entities. Following healing work, cold usually means that the chakra is releasing.

Heat: Occurs where energy is inflamed or congested. After healing work, it can mean that positive energy is being added.

Holes: Holes indicate missing chakric energy. There are dozens of causes for this, which could include the following: a cord has been ripped out but the area hasn't been filled in; it is an ejection site of the subject's inner child or soul; it is a remnant from a traumatic accident or trauma; or the area was damaged from serious abuse, such as from physical or sexual abuse or exposure to life-threatening addictions. Typically, the initial cause of a hole is being abused by someone else. We can then establish a pattern of self-abuse, which reinitiates the hole.

Slits, Rips, and Tears: These are usually present as an aftermath of chronic abuse—especially mental or emotional—or neglect.

Thin Areas: Lack of boundaries.

Leaks: Escaping energy, which usually indicates a cord or at least the belief that in order to survive or be loved, the subject must give away their energy.

Blotches, Fuzziness, or Muddiness: Congested energy, either the subject's or another's.

While these observations don't necessarily tell you the cause of the problems, they provide clues. You can follow up by using applied kinesiology or intuition for a more thorough assessment.

EXERCISE: **Assessing with Intuition—Four Styles**

Inevitably, intuition will become your best friend when performing assessments. Following are ways to use the four intuitive styles for

chakra assessment.

Physical Intuition: If you are gifted in this empathic style, you will sense in your own body what is occurring in other people's chakras. You might feel heat, congestion, pain, or emotions in the same areas where it is (or was) experienced in the subject's body. Then again, you might intuitively just "know" or sense what chakra(s) to concentrate on. Use these same skills to probe for the issues that are stuck in your own chakras.

Spiritual Intuition: To obtain spiritual insights, ask yourself questions like these: What does my higher spiritual guidance indicate? What clues does the Divine provide as to chakra issues and needs? What might my own—or another's—spiritual guidance want to reveal? Prayer, meditation, and contemplation can be beneficial tools for the spiritual empath to assess issues, for self or others.

Verbal Intuition: Ask your highest guidance to link you with a source that can provide accurate and ethical verbal information. Now ask to have the core imbalanced chakra revealed. You might hear a sentence, word, statement, or even the tonal quality of the chakra. Then request a full explanation of the reasons this chakra is out of balance. Consider speaking the answers aloud or writing them down. A verbal intuitive can even sing the answers.

Visual Intuition: Ask your inner or higher guidance to help you perceive an image or color pinpointing the most disturbed chakra. Now ask for pictures or visions to determine the underlying issues.

Now you have traveled the globe, touching down longest in the Western hemisphere, to acquire building blocks for your chakra medicine adventure. After learning universal tools for chakra analysis and healing, including the five steps to grounding, Spirit-to-Spirit, applied kinesiology, and the use of the pendulum and intuition, you were instructed in various ways to locate the chakras and get to work. You learned powerful methods for analyzing the

state of affairs within the chakras, from sensing blocks to using your intuition for evaluation purposes.

Now that you know how to assess your chakras, it is time to restore balance. The next chapter features techniques you can use for this purpose; additional techniques are covered in the following chapter to supplement these basic practices.

[contents]

Chakra Medicine Methods II

HEALING

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
people open their hearts?

HARUKI MURAKAMI

Deep within our hearts we desire healing. Chakras are portals to healing, inviting health, prosperity, and happiness. This chapter will showcase a few of the most accessible chakra healing methods.

The central theme of all the approaches you will find here is chakra balancing, a term often used to mean the process of clearing imbalances, disease (or issues that are causing "lack of ease"), and blockages from specific chakras. It also concerns the relationship between chakras, referring to the need to coordinate their efforts. As well, it speaks to the chakra's capacity for sharing its negative and positive energies with the rest of our being—body, mind, and soul.

There are several activities involved in a complete chakra balancing and many terms to describe each one. Having located and read the chakras in the last chapter, we might now cleanse or clean the chakras, which involves healing issues and opening the innate healthy energies embedded in each chakra—as well as opening the chakras, period. This stage can also involve chakra repair. Chakra repair can include activities ranging from sewing up rips and tears and releasing blockages to sealing chakra boundaries for the sake of safety. Chakra medicine can also involve aligning the chakras or spreading the joy of a newly healthy chakra and making sure the chakras bolster one another's activities. In this chapter I will teach you simple ways to perform all of these chakra medicine techniques.

Chakra Cleansing

One of the more popular chakric treatments is chakra cleansing, also called chakra clearing and cleaning. In the same way you cleanse your skin each day, ridding yourself of dirt, toxins, and impurities, so can you cleanse your own or another's chakras.

There are many ways to cleanse the chakras, but no matter the method you choose, the purpose is to release congested subtle energy in order to improve every level of well-being. Cleansing can also free up energy that is stuck in one chakra or part of a chakra and allow it to return to its rightful place, thus plugging or sealing holes and rips.

You can cleanse just one or a couple or all of chakras. I find it useful to first clean the most damaged chakra and then cleanse the remaining ones. When we shift one chakra, all others detoxify.

EXERCISE: **Chakra Clearing with Hands-On Interaction**

You can perform this exercise on another person or on whichever chakras you can reach on yourself.

Rub your hands together and open your palms in preparation for sending and receiving energy. Decide whether you want to run energy through your hands or around them through the surrounding energy field; the latter is a safer and cleaner process.

Set an intention about your goals. You can establish a general objective, such as to release all energies unnecessary for you at this time. You can also create more directed goals based on a chakra assessment, such as to clear all past-life issues, cleanse yourself of others' energies, let go of all physical, emotional, mental, or relational misperceptions, and more.

Decide whether to work on both sides of the chakras, front and back, or just one side. If you can only work on one side, establish the intention that all work you perform will clear both sides.

Hold your pulling or receiving hand between two and six inches away from your first chakra. Activate your goal with intention and draw out

the undesirable energies. It's safest to ask that the Divine, nature, guides, or some other positive forces take this energy away to a safe place.

Set your sending hand in the same area and transmit healing energy to fill in the empty spaces.

Hold both hands over the area and ask that balance and integration be provided through them.

An alternative: if you are able to work on both sides of someone's chakra at the same time, you can pull negative energy through the front side and send in healing energy through the back side.

Perform these actions all the way up the chakra system.

At the close of your clearing session, shake your hands and ask that the Divine take any extra energy away from you.

Are you working on yourself? You can modify the above exercise by performing the same tasks on all your front-side chakras, deciding that this activity will clear the front and back sides.

Chakra cleansing also responds well to natural elements. Employing nature's implements can encourage the body to release toxins and provide healthy energies for renewal.

There are many ways to add the elements to a hands-on process. These can include the following:

- Clear your chakras in the shower or bathtub. The water will wash the toxins away and rinse any contaminated energy off your hands.
- Use a bowl of water if you are working on someone else. You can wash off your hands after clearing each chakra.
- Work on yourself or someone else outdoors in the open air or in sunlight.
- Consider using gemstones, wooden implements, or other natural substances in addition to sound or color. The kinds of substances you will find useful are discussed in chapter 15.

EXERCISE: **Chakra Clearing with Intuitive Meditation**

There are dozens if not hundreds of ways to clear your chakras while in a meditative state. The following exercise employs the colors of the chakras as a powerful intuitive tool. As you progress through the steps, remember that the natural state of the chakras is clean and pure. You are simply helping them return to homeostasis.

- Take a few deep breaths and bring yourself into a relaxed state.
- Focus on your first chakra and envision it as black, thereby depicting only its unnecessary energy.
- Ask the Divine or your inner spirit to pull the undesirable energy from your chakra, bringing it into nature or the heavens to be transformed.
- Now activate the natural color of the chakra—in this case, red—through intention. As this color emanates from the center of the chakra, it pushes out any remaining negative energy.
- Concentrate on this color, either seeing, sensing, or even hearing it, until it adjoins with the first auric field, which I locate within the skin and up to an inch outside of it; others find it just outside of the skin. Allow these two subtle anatomies to be fully linked and cleansed.
- Once you sense that your first chakra is vibrant and healthy, move on to your second chakra, and so on.
- When you are done with this exercise, ask that your chakras be aligned like the arc of a rainbow.
- Take a few deep breaths and return to your normal state of consciousness.

EXERCISE: **Healing Chakra Blocks**

Besides chakra clearing, it can be necessary to more precisely dissolve a chakra block or stronghold. The following five steps can be useful for doing so:

1: Define the Nature of the Stronghold

Return to the "Backgrounder: A Word About Blocks" section on page 209 to do so. You can also reference the "Beliefs and Your Chakra Anatomy" section on page 230 to further define the nature of the blocks.

2: Return to the Causal Situation

This process can employ techniques often used in regression therapy, such as memory recall or hypnotherapy. The process usually involves calming the body and mind and deliberately allowing the inner self to return to the causal event. It's frequently helpful to ask a spiritual helper to assist. It's now important to ask questions of yourself or another, such as the following:

- What events took place, including those you may not have previously considered?
- Who was involved, what did they do, and what effects did their actions create?
- What was your (or another's) full range of personal feelings and reactions? What strongholds were forged and why? How do these affect you or the subject today?
- What needs were unmet? How did this affect the chakras?
- What dysfunctional beliefs resulted from this situation and how are they still playing out?
- What additional insights can help heal the wounded self and repair the fractured chakra?

3: Transform the Causal Situation

We cannot change the past, but we can alter our perceptions of it. To do so, we must uncover the silver lining in the dark cloud and abstain from judging the conclusions we drew from a stressful situation. We did what we needed to do at the time. We believed what was necessary to believe. We felt what we felt. It isn't our job to criticize the beliefs or feelings that might now be causing us woe.

What we can do, however, is work with an inner self or a divine guide for insight and inspiration for maturing our stuck feelings and beliefs. Following are some examples of how feelings, when embraced, can mature:

Sadness: Indicates that we feel a loss of love. Sadness matures into love once we complete our grieving.

Anger: Shows that we need a boundary. Anger matures into power after we establish boundaries.

Fear: Tells us we are being endangered. To listen to our fear is to mature into safety.

Disgust: Insists that something or someone isn't healthy for us. Disgust transforms into self-love when we flow with it.

Happiness: Says we want more of the same. Eventually all feelings mature into happiness or some form of it—compassion, contentment, sanctity, bliss, acceptance, and the like.

Likewise, all "self-destructive" beliefs can also mature into higher truths. We simply need to pluck the lustrous pearl from the oyster and throw away the rest. For instance, believing ourselves unworthy of love contains a simple truth: we believe it is possible to feel worthy of love. We can now concentrate on our belief in the power of love as a way to open to that very power.

After removing the pearl from the hardship, we can ask what else must be done to transform the remaining darkness and restore light. Does the formula include self-compassion, a new behavior, a different belief, or something else? Remember, too, that you can ask for signs to show you the way—a new way.

4: Forgive

Grace is the ultimate healing power. Love in motion, grace covers all wounds once we forgive—a process that allows us to leave the past in the past and embrace a better future. Ask what needs to be done to

move to forgiveness of the self and others—and to forgive the Divine, too, if that is a factor.

5: Activate Chakra Energy

Strongholds often repress powers inherent in a chakra. It's helpful now to tap the hidden reservoirs of truth, love, and giftedness. Ask that it be done, and it will be so.

Pulling Out or Moving Chakra Energy

Sometimes we might want to forcefully pull or move energy, especially when we find congested or blotchy areas or attachments. We can also shift energy from a clogged area to another site. For instance, I frequently find that when someone has a headache, red energy is stuck in the head rather than the first chakra (the natural home of the color red). When I return the energy to the hips, the headache reduces or disappears.

There are several ways to accomplish these energy goals. The following steps employ your hands and the ability to work with what I call "healing streams of grace."

Healing streams of grace are my most important energetic tool. Intuitively, I envision this world replete with rivers of light. This light reflects the Divine's love and generates directly from the Source. Every stream of light is constructed uniquely by the Divine and can be directed to accomplish any aim. One particular stream of grace might reduce a tumor; another can wrap itself around a wounded inner child and provide the balm of love. We don't have to literally steer a stream of grace toward an endeavor but merely ask for what we need and assume its presence.

Because of their universal malleability and mobility, streams of grace can release attachments, gently rid us of ancestral entities, and more. They can also assure us that the energy we pull out of our own or another's chakra is safely disposed of and that the resulting empty space is filled in appropriately. Streams of grace can also cleanse the energy we're moving and ensure balance.

EXERCISE: **Relieving Congestion in a Chakra**

As you read through and practice the following steps, think about all the other ways you can use healing streams of grace.

- Concentrate on the bodily or chakra area that is congested.
- Decide whether the energy needs to be removed or relocated (or a combination of these choices).
- Using intuition or your hands, reach into the etheric field of the affected chakra and envision yourself removing the blockage. You can also ask Spirit to accomplish this goal for you. If you are using your hands, you might actually find yourself reaching downward, as if into the body, grasping energy and sending it into space.
- Use your intention to send healing streams of grace wherever they should go.

Energizing or Charging the Chakras

Chakras can be deficient in energy; if this is the case, they need to be energized or charged. Sometimes the reason for low energy is that the chakra isn't receiving kundalini or support from the chakra below it. In this case, it's helpful to clear the blocked chakra and retest the depleted chakra. As well, a chakra might be reduced because of attachments, strongholds, holes, or rips. In these cases, it's important to fix the source of the problem. Yet another scenario can involve a chakra that won't be cleansed; it might need to be energized with enough "rocket fuel" to release congestion. And, at times, a chakra is simply tired from working too hard. No matter the situation, chakra charging can be an invaluable tool.

EXERCISE: **Charging a Chakra**

We can use intuition to charge our own or another's chakra, simply by focusing on our intention, but we can also employ our hands to help another person or ourselves in a simple process. Though I am describing this exercise as it would be conducted on another person,

you can also use your hands on any part of your own body you can reach.

After preparing your hands, ask the subject to lie down or stand. You can work on the front or back side exclusively or on each side, one at a time. Hold your hands next to each other between two and six inches away from the depleted chakra and absorb light from the atmosphere. You can also receive this energy as streams of grace from the heavenly spheres. Now send this energy—either from your hands or from the fields around them—straight into the dilapidated chakra, allowing that chakra to absorb this energy until it is fully charged. You will sense a cessation of flow when this happens. You can conduct this exercise with every chakra, if need be. Know that besides charging the chakras, this activity can also help seal them so they stop losing energy.

The Light Wand: A Universal Sewing Kit

This technique is especially useful for chakra holes, rips, congestion, and repair. I call it "the light wand." I developed the light wand technique after studying energy healing with shamans in various countries around the world. It is not a unique approach, however. There is a similar technique used in qigong, the Healing Touch Program, Egyptian healing, crystal therapies, and more. In fact, many practitioners turn a finger into a light wand in order to wield healing energy and command energy transformation. Others use crystal tools, sticks, canes, and other implements for the same purpose.

The basic theory behind the light wand, which is an energetic (and therefore invisible) tool, is that everything is made of sound or electromagnetic energy. This tool is intended to act as a conduit for both, like a sonic light conductor. I also consider it an extension of and focus for the healing streams of grace described earlier.

This tool is maneuvered as a sort of magic wand. It can move, empty, and add energy. It can serve as a sewing needle to repair rips. It can penetrate congested energy, or blocks, that are thick and stuck, and it can shift energy from outside the body to fill in holes. The only requirement is that you

manage it with your inner spirit or a divine power, enabling appropriate use. It can bring in a stream of grace, which can be substituted for cords or entity attachments, and it can also be used to spread energy around a chakra and close it off to external intrusions.

EXERCISE: **Using a Light Wand**

Having determined the nature of a chakra dysfunction, you can conduct the following steps to use the wand:

- Assume the existence of this wand and your ability to hold it in either hand. Know that it can pull, move, or add energy.
- Open to universal energy or a stream of grace. Ask your guidance to allow or affirm your right to use the wand for all tasks at hand. You don't need to change wands to undertake all your tasks.
- Send sound and light. Perceive the needed sonic and light energies passing through the wand and directly into the chakra you are working on.
- Participate in the healing activities as led by your intuition. You can use the energy as a laser to remove a tumor, as a sewing kit to repair a rip, or in the form of a spoon to soothe and seal boundaries.
- Collect unnecessary energies. Know that whatever energy needs to be taken away is moved through the wand, not through your personal energy system.
- Cleanse the wand. Before you are done, imagine yourself cleaning the wand. Ask angels to hold the wand and clean it with their light. Imagine an element—wind, water, or fire—purifying the wand. Also, you can ask that the Divine breathe directly into your magic wand. Then visualize yourself putting it away until you need it again.

Aligning the Chakras

After working on the chakras it's helpful to align them, which involves connecting them together and inviting a sharing of subtle energy. This

exercise can also serve as a stand-alone process for promoting relaxation, decreasing pain, relieving anxiety, and encouraging stability.

There are two approaches covered in this section. The first involves working on someone else, and the other is a self-administered process.

EXERCISE: **Aligning Another's Chakras**

This process uses the hands to assist another with chakra alignment. It is the method I have adapted from my original training in the Therapeutic Touch Program, one of the first hands-on energy healing systems.

Ask the subject to lie flat on their back. Prepare your hands and then establish your intention to align the subject's chakras. You can hold your hands either on or over the chakras; I will provide instruction as if you are touching the subject's body.

Stand at the subject's feet, facing forward. Holding your subject's feet, with your palms on the soles, ask that each foot and their related chakras become free from restrictive energy. Now cup your hands over the subject's upper feet, palms down, establishing the same intention. I recommend that you repeat these two steps, reversing your hands, so that each foot is held or touched by each hand.

You are now going to move until you are standing at the subject's left side, perpendicular to the length of calf between their feet and knees. Leave your left hand on the top of your subject's feet, touching both feet if possible, and put your right hand on the person's knees. After these two areas feel aligned, prepare to move toward the subject's head. As you shift to a position perpendicular to the thighs, move your left hand to the knee area and once it is there, put your right hand anywhere from a few inches to a foot above the first chakra area. The first chakra is the only chakra that I recommend you never touch but always work above, for the sake of sexual appropriateness.

The goal of shifting hands is to make sure that at all times you are touching (or working on) a chakra with one of your hands.

When these two centers feel aligned, move upward again to stand between the subject's hips and heart. Move your left hand so it lingers above the first chakra area and put your right hand over the sacral chakra. You will now continue this pattern of moving toward the subject's head and replacing one hand with another until you reach the crown.

At the top of the head, with your right hand on the crown chakra, shift your body so you are standing at the subject's head, facing toward the feet. Now set both hands on either side of the skull and perform "brain balancing," which involves equalizing the energy passing between the right and left sides of the brain. Now begin to move down the body at the opposite or right side of the subject's body. Keep your left hand on the top of the crown chakra and set your right one on the sixth chakra. Continue this pattern until you return to the feet.

With your left hand still on the top of the feet, move from the side of their body so you are standing at the feet, facing toward the head. Put your right hand on the sole and then add your left hand, so your right hand is on the right sole and your left hand on the left sole. Breathe deeply and know that you have aligned the subject's chakras.

EXERCISE: **Aligning Your Own Chakras**

You can align your own chakras by following the basic design of the previous exercise. Obviously you can't reach all parts of your body. Instead, sit in a chair and move from one part of your body to another in the front, touching the parts you can reach. You can also meditate upon the areas you can't reach and ask your higher self to deliver needed energy.

Beliefs and Your Chakra Anatomy

I have developed a "cheat sheet," based in part on studies I have read but primarily on my own client practice, to help you pinpoint the exact nature of the beliefs you might be dealing with when faced with a stronghold. The

following chart lists the various body parts located within the different chakra areas and divides them according to the right/masculine and left/feminine parts of the body. The beliefs the different body parts manage are briefly listed according to this right side/left side division.

Some body parts, such as the liver, are only located on one side of the body. Others are centered, such as the nose. Still others, like the nostrils, have a left and a right side. In all cases I have presented the masculine considerations of the body part in the "right side" column and the feminine considerations of the issues in the "left side" column. This specificity will help you gain a detailed sense of what you or another person might be experiencing in the body and correlated chakras.

	RIGHT SIDE/MASCULINE	LEFT SIDE/FEMININE
Seventh	*Head (also sixth):* Ability to give from highest self *Cranium bones (also sixth):* Flexible but moral standards *Upper brain:* Acts on highest knowledge *Pineal:* Expressing life purpose *Face (also sixth and fifth):* Image in world	*Head (also sixth):* Ability to receive higher things *Cranium bones (also sixth):* Discernment of acceptable behavior from others *Upper brain:* Exposes self to wisdom *Pineal:* Receiving grace *Face (also sixth and fifth):* Self-image
Sixth	*Middle brain:* Care of clan *Pituitary:* Vision for manifesting *Thalamus:* Management of senses based on stored emotions/shock *Right eye:* "Solar" eye; how to perceive actions of self and others	*Middle brain:* Receives from clan *Pituitary:* Receiving revelation *Thalamus:* Receives psychic input *Left eye:* "Lunar" eye; how to perceive what others sense or feel through intuition
Fifth	*Lower brain:* Decision to fight, flee, or take issues out on others *Right nostril:* "Solar" end of pingali nadi: management of our overall vitality *Sinuses:* Effect of others' subliminal messages *Right ear:* Messages from males/about masculine self *Nose:* Setting a spiritual direction *Mouth:* Communication with others	*Lower brain:* Decision to freeze or take issues out on self *Left nostril:* "Lunar" end of ida nadi: management of our psychology *Sinuses:* Effect of our hidden messages to ourselves *Left ear:* Messages from females/about feminine self *Nose:* Filtering spiritual intake *Mouth:* Consumption

	Right side of jaw: Decisiveness about what to say *Lips:* The feelings we will show others *Teeth:* Expression of natural truth *Thyroid:* Energy to express desires *Neck:* Honoring others' views/positions *Right shoulder (with fourth):* Burdens or duties carried out for others	*Left side of jaw:* Decisiveness about what to think *Lips:* Our true feelings *Teeth:* Breaking down of ideas *Thyroid:* Beliefs about worthiness to express desires *Neck:* Honoring own views/positions *Left shoulder (with fourth):* Burdens or duties carried out for self
Fourth	*Right arm:* How we bless others *Right elbow:* Making space for others *Right wrist:* Handling world with ease *Right hand:* Taking or doing *Right fingers:* Acting with precision *Sternum:* Holds inner child's goals *Ribs:* Boundaries related to love *Heart:* Ability to give love *Right lung:* Worthiness to partner with Spirit *Right breast:* Mothering of others *Diaphragm:* How you move with Spirit in the world	*Left arm:* What blessings we will accept *Left elbow:* Making space for self *Left wrist:* Accepting situations with ease *Left hand:* Receiving *Left fingers:* Organizing incoming energy with precision *Sternum:* Holds inner child's needs *Ribs:* Beliefs about boundaries we deserve *Heart:* Ability to receive love; self-love *Left lung:* Worthiness to receive from Spirit *Left breast:* Mothering of self *Diaphragm:* How Spirit moves into your world
Third	*Liver:* External power *Gallbladder:* Daring action *Stomach:* Digestion of external ideas *Spleen:* How we nurture the bloodline *Pancreas:* Giving sweetness to others *Kidneys (with first and second):* Treatment of "inner self" by others	*Liver:* Internal power *Gallbladder:* Daring beliefs *Stomach:* Digestion of internal ideas *Spleen:* How our bloodline nurtures us *Pancreas:* Acceptance of sweetness of life *Kidneys (with first and second):* Relationship with inner child
Second	*Small intestines:* Sharing of nourishment *Appendix:* Expression of stored emptions (sometimes others' emotions) *Ovaries:* Acting creatively from feminine self *Testes:* Masculine activities *Uterus:* Expressing into the universe/new beginnings *Prostate:* Sense of adequacy in world	*Small intestines:* Assimilation of nourishment *Appendix:* Repression of stored emotions (sometimes others' emotions) *Ovaries:* Accepting of own creative feminine *Testes:* Accepting masculine self *Uterus:* Accepting from the universe/new beginnings *Prostate:* Sense of adequacy in self

First	*Skin:* What we give out/protection	*Skin:* What we take in/protection
	Hip: Holding of power in relation to others	*Hip:* Holding of power in relation to self
	Large intestines: Releasing waste	*Large intestines:* What we hold on to
	Pelvis: Decisions about moving forward	*Pelvis:* Decisions about responding to others
	Cervix: Movement of earthly feminine into world	*Cervix:* Receiving of earthly feminine into self
	Rectum: Pressure others put on you	*Rectum:* Pressure you put on yourself
	Bladder: Expenditure of energy for gratification	*Bladder:* Storage of energy for delayed gratification
	Anus: Ability to create endings	*Anus:* Ability to accept endings
	Penis: Courage versus bravado	*Penis:* Inner versus outer power
	Right thigh: Stores father's energies	*Left thigh:* Stores mother's energies
	Right knee: Pride's effects on moving forward	*Left knee:* Humility's effects on moving forward
	Right shin: Physical responses to others' reactions	*Left shin:* Emotional responses to others' reactions
	Right ankle: Flexible action	*Left ankle:* Flexible feelings/reactions
	Right foot: Advancement of self when taking action	*Left foot:* Receptivity to needs of self/others when taking action
	Right toes: Details about action taken when planned	*Left toes:* Feelings about actions taken when planned

Systems

Muscular: Willpower for achieving goals, soft tissue relates to connection

Reproductive: Fertility, creativity

Digestive: Ideas, ideals

Respiratory: Expression of personal spirit, relationship with Spirit

Excretory: Release, waste management

Circulatory: Flow of love

Nervous: Communication, flow of vital energy

Skeletal: Foundation, fundamental

EXERCISE: **Working with Beliefs in Seven Steps**

- Select a feeling of discomfort or a situation that is stressful.
- Sit or lie in a comfortable position. Breathe deeply and relax.

- Activate your conscious mind or higher self, which will operate as a vehicle for this journey.
- Concentrate on the issue, problem, opportunity, or symptom, and let your body show you where it lies. You might feel an organ or area of the body, perceive an image highlighting a body part, or hear an answer in your head.
- Focus on the particular body part and, if you desire, find it in the chart. Noting the meaning of that body part and, if applicable, its relationship with the left or right side of your body, "fall" into the core of the bodily area. As you sink in, become aware of the elements related to the presenting issues. Are there particular situations or people affiliated with the symptoms? Are there causal issues, beliefs, or emotions? The more completely you define the issue or block, the easier it will be to heal it.
- Now track the body part to its connected chakra and dive into the center wheel of that chakra. Perceive the chakra as the loving holder of the issue and its causal factors but also the storage house—the mother—of all needed healing and reflection. Allow the center of the chakra to open like a doorway, from which emanate streams of wisdom, healing, and knowledge. Remain in the flow of this energy until you feel like you can release the issue and hold on to the corresponding wisdom.
- Allow the chakra to share healing and higher perception to all other chakras and parts of the body. Breathe deeply and stretch; when you are ready, reconnect with your everyday reality.[2]

You've now toured a variety of chakra medicine healing techniques that were developed in the Western hemisphere, gathering tools for your wellness toolbox. Using the techniques outlined in the previous chapter, you progressed from chakra evaluation to applying methods to cleanse the chakras, heal blocks, pull out undesirable energy, and repair and align the

chakras. Finally you were introduced to my belief system list, which you can use to pinpoint the stricken chakra based on symptoms.

Now we'll travel to the East and gather additional chakra medicine techniques and insights.

[contents]

Chakra Medicine Practices

EASTERN METHODS

> An ounce of practice is worth more than
> tons of preaching.
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

So far we've been delving into Western chakra medicine practices, which are, for the most part, fairly straightforward. Eastern processes offer an additional salting of spiritual practices. When blended with physical practices, these draw on the historical power of chakra medicine to clear and balance our chakras and ourselves. If you want to explore the origins of Eastern chakra work, a history of chakraology is available in Part 4 and can provide additional insight into these often ancient techniques.

The Yamas and Niyamas: The Importance of Living a Clean Life

Thousands of years ago a man named Patanjali presented eight rungs, or "limbs," of yoga that the yogi must practice to achieve enlightenment. The first two rungs on the ladder to the heavens are the yamas and niyamas. While we begin our discussion of these principles in the Hindu tradition, the yamas and niyamas are universal ideas that cut across cultures, religions, gender, and ethnicity. In many ways they lay the foundation for all the practices in this book.

The Five Yamas

There are five yamas, which can be thought of as codes of self-regulation that guide our interaction with the external world. Briefly, they are:

Ahimsa: Nonviolence

Asteya: Not stealing

Satya: Honesty

Brahmacharya: The practice of seeking the presence of God, or conduct worthy of one who seeks to know Brahman

Aparigraha: Nongrasping, nonpossessiveness

As you shall discover, many of the practices in this chapter serve to support us in practicing the yamas. We take a deep breath when we're irritated so we may hold our temper; we clear our chakras so we may honestly address our blockages and imbalances; we eat mindfully to contemplate the continual presence of Spirit; and we practice mudras to foster the state of aparigraha.

The Niyamas

There are five niyama principles as well. These balance the outward-focused yamas in that they serve as practices for the internal training of the self and the cultivation of positive virtues. They are as follows:

Shaucha: Purity of body and mind

Santosha: Contentment

Tapah: Training of the senses; austerity

Svadhyaya: Self-study, reflecting on sacred words

Ishvara Pranidhana: Surrender to God[1]

Here we find the underlying reasons for further chakra medicine practices. Eating healthy food, using gemstones, and washing our chakras with color are all ways to practice shaucha. What are we aiming for when we create yantras or mantras but svadhyaya, reflection on the sacred? What are we ultimately seeking to achieve through all our aims but ishvara pranidhana?

In all of these ways we are called to follow our path toward a life immersed in love. And many believe this journey begins with—and is completed through—sacred breathing, or pranayama.

Pranayama: The Breath of Spirit

Sprinkled throughout this book are breathing practices related to specific chakras or chakra systems. Breathing has been key to the process of enlightenment since the dawn of chakraology. Because I cannot overstate the importance of breathing in chakra medicine, this section features a variety of additional practices.

In fact, Yogi Bhajan suggests that pranayama is the most creative activity God designed for humankind: from breath comes life. As we've been exploring throughout this book, the core of pranayama, the practice of breathing, is prana, the vital force, or energy, of the universe. Prana is itself a subtle energy, and the breath is the external manifestation of it. Spiritually oriented breathwork, therefore, directs cosmic energies through our respiratory system, which also benefits our health. The air sacs in our lungs, if unfolded, would cover 1,404,000 square feet. Think of the ripple effects of filling them with breath! Proper breathing also cultivates kundalini energy, clears and balances our chakras, and regulates energy flow through our 72,000-plus nadis. How could pranayama *not* benefit body, mind, and soul? To connect through breath to the divine light is to link directly to the Divine.

Breathing exercises differ according to yoga modalities and cultural perspectives. Kundalini yoga practitioners often combine pranayama activities with mantras and mudras, while Hatha yoga afficionados merge postures with breathing.[2] Specific pranayama practices are performed daily in Ashtanga and Bikram yoga, while in other traditions one selects from practices as needed.[3]

Breathing is also important in spiritual traditions of the West. Certain Christian denominations practice centering prayer, which uses breathwork, and various types of Jewish meditation emphasize breathwork to enable followers to find their own prophetic voice.[4]

Contemporary research is proving that yoga practices, of which pranayama is a vital component, are effective tools for preventing and managing disease. Yoga reduces stress and anxiety, triggers life-enhancing neurohormonal mechanisms, and can even benefit cancer patients. It increases feelings of well-being, alleviates hypertension, and helps manage weight. Pranayama in

particular oxygenates our bodies, cleanses our lymph system, strengthens our immune system, bathes our cells in nutrients, and alleviates our "flight, fight, or freeze" responses.[5]

Breathing is particularly important today because we receive less oxygen from the air in modern times than we did hundreds of years ago. Infections and physical and emotional stress deplete the available oxygen in our bodies. Toxic stress resulting from environmental chemicals requires more oxygen, not less, to enable detoxification. Unfortunately, there are fewer trees in the world and a lot more carbon dioxide, reducing our available atmospheric oxygen.[6] All these reasons add up to the importance of an intentional and regular practice of pranayama.

Pranayama can be as simple as taking full, slow, and deep breaths through the nose and concentrating on inhalation, exhalation, and the pause in between. With this focus on the breath, experts suggest making the exhalation longer than the inhalation; this soothes the main organs located in the abdominal cavity and circulates our cleansing fluids, including the lymph. It also more completely empties the bottom third of the lungs, where toxins can accumulate. Long-term practice of this technique infuses the bottom of the lungs with nourishing breath after the cleansing has occurred. It also breaks up the unconscious regulation of breathing and, subsequently, unconscious emotional patterns.

Inhaling through the nose filters, warms, and moistens the air, assuring an efficient transfer of oxygen and carbon dioxide. And breathing to the pause point teaches us that we can self-regulate in all areas of our life, not only in our breathing. We gain awareness of the connection between our choices and their consequences. As we more fully activate our energetic anatomy, we develop spiritual awareness and balance. We develop ourselves.[7]

There are thousands of different types of pranayama, with about fifty different breathing practices described in the ancient spiritual Hindu texts known as the Vedas alone. Besides the three main aspects of pranayama—inhalation, exhalation, and retention—there are traditional guidelines related to place, time, and number of breaths. These rules can be quite specific.

Those related to place, for example, include practicing breathwork in a sacred, undisturbed location, and they go on to recommend sitting on kusa grass and deerskin near a reservoir with no snakes or animals nearby. The recommended times for a specific practice might be at the beginning or end of winter, and one might chant a *bija* (seed syllable) mantra sixteen times while inhaling, then retain the air while chanting up to sixty-four times.[8]

Fortunately for us, modern practices, while based on ancient ones, are less complex than this, yet common guidelines still apply. Many believe it is best to practice pranayama on an empty stomach, for example.

Following are several of the most accessible forms of pranayama, described with their positive benefits. For meditative sitting poses that support the practice of many of these exercises, see "Poses for Seated Meditation" on page 241.

EXERCISE: **Ujjayi Pranayama**

- Sit comfortably.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through both nostrils.
- Hold your breath as long as you can.
- Exhale slowly, contracting the air passageways in your throat and making an audible whispering sound, sometimes also described as a "rushing" or "ocean" sound.

This is one round of ujjayi breath, which I recommend mainly for clearing and easing your fifth chakra. It will strengthen your vocal cords, stimulate the thyroid, improve blood circulation, and ease lung, chest, and throat tension. Do not practice ujjayi breathing if you have heart problems.[9]

EXERCISE: **Bhramari Pranayama**

- Sit in a meditative position.
- With your back straight, relax your shoulders and close your eyes.
- Close both of your ears with your index fingers.
- Raise your elbows to shoulder level to the side.

- Inhale deeply.
- Hold your breath as long as you can.
- Exhale slowly while making the sound of the letter M—*m-m-m-m-m*—resembling the buzzing sound of a bee.

Bhramari calms and relaxes, relieves stress, increases concentration, and strengthens your vocal cords; therefore, it is ideal for cleansing your fifth chakra and is also supportive of the sixth chakra. It is traditionally best practiced at night or in the early morning.[10]

EXERCISE: **Bhastrika Pranayama**

- Sit in a meditative position.
- Straighten your back and relax your shoulders.
- Close your right nostril with your right thumb and raise your right elbow to the level of your right shoulder in the front.
- Close your eyes. Now inhale and exhale through your left nostril, first slowly, and then a little faster.
- Repeat the previous step between twenty and twenty-five times.
- Take a long breath, drawing from your belly, and hold it as long as you can.
- Repeat the entire round by closing your left nostril and breathing through your right.

Bhastrika aids detoxification and weight loss, enhances digestion, regulates the nervous system, and acts as a blood purifier. You should avoid it if you have high blood pressure, a hernia, or heart and lung problems. Because it draws breath up through the belly, it is beneficial for your third chakra and is also used to advance the sixth chakra. If you have a chronic illness or lack stamina, do not do bhastrika frequently.[11]

EXERCISE: **Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing)**

- Sit in a meditative pose. When practicing this pranayama, you will breathe into your chest and not your belly.
- Use your right thumb to close your right nostril.
- Inhale through your left nostril.
- Close your left nostril with your right hand's index and middle fingers.
- Exhale through your right nostril.
- Inhale through your right nostril.
- Close your right nostril with your right thumb.
- Exhale through your left nostril.

This exercise balances all your chakras, normalizes your body temperature, relieves stress, cleans the nadis, improves circulation, and has anti-aging effects.[12] You may begin with five rounds of anulom vilom daily and increase the number of rounds as your capacity grows.[13]

EXERCISE: **Udgeeth Pranayama**

- Breathe in deeply through your nose. Feel your diaphragm moving down, allowing your lungs to expand and forcing your abdomen out. Continue inhaling until your chest expands and your collarbones rise.
- Exhale slowly while chanting *om* for about twenty seconds. Keep the "o" long and the "m" short.
- You can repeat this cycle three times.

The udgeeth practice is helpful for relieving insomnia and depression and increasing concentration. It clears the fourth chakra and can pull energy up through all the chakras. And with this practice you are singing with the earth, whose own vibration is believed to resonate with *om*.[14]

Poses for Seated Meditation

There are two particular sitting poses that enable the correct posture for pranayama, chanting, and other meditative practices, as well as for simple relaxation.

EXERCISE: **Sukhasana Pose**

Also called the easy, decent, or pleasant pose, this asana (pose)—which is practiced in yoga, Buddhism, and Hinduism—is similar to sitting in a cross-legged position. Here is how to perform Sukhasana; see Illustration 17 for tips.

- Use one or two folded blankets or a mat to create a flat base. Sit on this base.
- Sitting close to one end of the base, stretch your legs in front of you.
- Cross your shins and open your knees wide.
- Slip each foot beneath the opposite knee and fold your legs toward your torso.
- Keep your feet relaxed and make sure the outer edges of your feet rest on the floor and the inner arches are below the opposite shins.
- Ensure that you are in a neutral position by pressing your hands against the floor and lifting your seat bones. If you can, hang like that for a breath or two and then slowly lower yourself to the ground.
- Put your hands on your knees, palms down, and imagine your tailbone sinking into the floor.
- You can change leg positions when you need to.
- If you are having difficulty remaining in this position, you can sit with your back against a wall for support.

Avoid this posture if it produces pain or if you have knee, ankle, hip, or spine injuries. This exercise produces serenity, reduces stress, broadens your collarbones and chest, lengthens your spine, promotes alignment, reduces fatigue, and stretches your legs, ankles, and knees.[15]

EXERCISE: **Padmasana Pose**

This pose is also called *Kamalasana*, or the "lotus position," because the legs appear to form a lotus flower. This pose can be challenging for many people. Never force yourself into a challenging pose; instead, use an easier pose like Sukhasana or simply sit straight in a chair. You can also slowly work your way into these and other more difficult poses using Illustration 18 as a guide.

- Sit on the ground and extend your legs forward.
- Put your right foot on your left thigh and your left foot on your right thigh.
- Place your hands on your knees, palms up.
- Keep your spine straight and your head erect.
- Close your eyes.

This pose is considered ideal for pranayama. It improves concentration, assists with the flow of vital fluids, prevents abdominal and female reproductive issues, and encourages peace and longevity.[16]

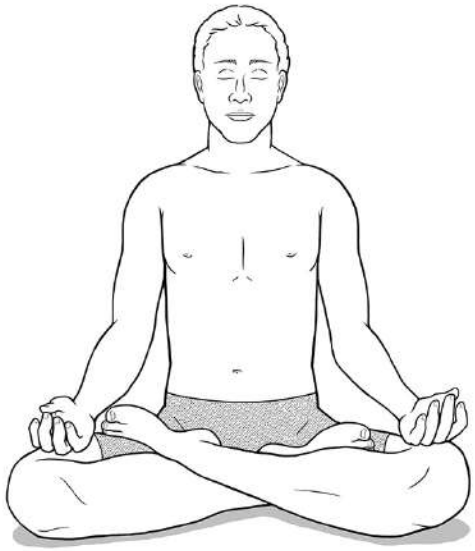


ILLUSTRATION 17—SUKHASANA (TOP) AND ILLUSTRATION 18—PADMASANA (BOTTOM): These poses can be used for meditation. ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Mudras: Signs of the Soul

Mudras are movements or gestures that create psychic powers and spiritual emotions. Pranayama and other spiritual practices are often accompanied by mudras; in fact, many mudras combine asanas, pranayama, and one or more bandhas into one integrated activity. Mudras can also be stand-alone exercises.

When we consciously form a mudra it affects our subconscious, enabling an ever-increasing awareness of the flow of vital energy throughout our energetic system. Promoting physical health, mudras ultimately awaken and attune our chakras.

Mudras not only encompass a symbolic activity or gesture but can also involve *pratyahara*: withdrawal from the physical senses. When all is silent, our true self sometimes speaks the loudest, albeit without words. As you shall see in this section, mudras can involve shifts in facial features or other parts

of the body. Most mudras, however, whether "loud" or "quiet," employ the fingers.

In many cultural systems different fingers represent different energies, so selecting the fingers to form into a mudra is meaningful. In the traditional Indian system, the fingers hold the following meanings:

Thumb: *Paramatma,* or the Supreme Consciousness

Index Finger: Our *jivatman,* or individual soul

Middle Finger: *Sattva,* or purity

Ring Finger: *Rajas,* or passion

Little Finger: *Tamas,* or inertia

Touching the index finger and thumb together, a configuration common to many mudras, represents the union of the individual soul and the Supreme.[17]

Following are a few of the basic mudras:

EXERCISE: **Jnana and the Chin Mudras**

The jnana mudra (*jnana* means "knowledge") can be maintained for the duration of a pose and is accomplished this way:

- Sit in a meditation asana and bend the index finger of each hand. Let the tip touch the inside of your thumb, at the root. (In some systems, you touch the tip of your index finger with the tip of your thumb.) Keep your other three fingers straight.
- Place your hands on your knees, palms turned down.
- Make sure your three straight fingers and the thumb of each hand point toward the floor.

The steps to chin mudra are the same as the jnana mudra except you rest your hands with the palms facing up; the mudra can be seen below.

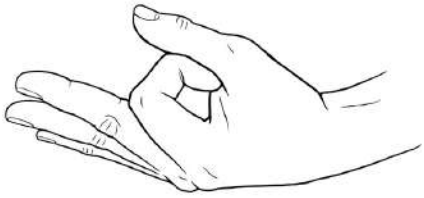


ILLUSTRATION 19—THE JNANA AND CHIN MUDRAS: This psychic gesture of consciousness is similar; the chin mudra is conducted with palms facing up, while the jnana mudra is palms-down. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Both mudras empower any asanas they accompany, and, according to Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, they also accomplish so much more. Combining TCM and chakra knowledge, Motoyama explains that prana (or chi) absorbed through manipura is sent into the lungs, from which it flows through the lung meridians into the thumbs. Some of the prana fills the "well" points on the tips of the thumbs. When the index finger touches the thumb in jnana and chin mudras, the energy that would normally be discharged from the body is instead sent to the large intestine meridian, which starts at the tip of the index finger. This preserves bodily vitality and allows one to sustain meditation for a longer time.[18]

EXERCISE: **Shambhavi Mudra**

Also called eyebrow-center gazing, this mudra involves gazing forward at a fixed point before moving your eyes as far upward as possible, all the while keeping your head stable. Next, focus your eyes at a spot between your eyebrows and concentrate on that point. Ideally you will do this while sitting in a meditation pose with your hands in jnana or chin mudra. In this position, concentrate on the connection between your individual self and the Supreme Consciousness for as long as you can.

This practice is highly regarded in yoga and enables the transcendence of the mind and ego, matched with an ever-increasing awareness of all things spiritual. This mudra is also ideal for awakening the ajña chakra, removing tension and anger, and strengthening the eyes.[19]

EXERCISE: **Ashvini Mudra**

Called the horse mudra, ashvini mudra involves the following steps:

- Sitting in a meditation asana, relax your body, close your eyes, and breathe normally.
- Contract your anal sphincter muscles for a few seconds and then relax them. Repeat this activity a few times.
- If you feel comfortable, contract your anus while inhaling. Hold your breath and then contract, and when you exhale release the contraction. Repeat this practice for as long as is comfortable.

This mudra is particularly beneficial for the first chakra, initiating control of the sphincter muscles while preventing prana from escaping the body. The resulting conservation of energy enables the climb of the kundalini. This mudra is particularly helpful for anyone suffering from anal, rectal, or uterine issues, as well as constipation. It is a helpful preparation for the mula bandha featured in this chapter.

ILLUSTRATION 20—NAVAMUKHI: This mudra of the nine gates enables a transcendence to higher awareness. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Navamukhi Mudra**

Known as the mudra of the nine gates, this practice frequently accompanies the mula and vajroli mudras. It is important because it works with the nine bodily openings through which we sense the physical world.

For this mudra, you use your fingers to close these gates in the temple of the body so your spirit can pass through the tenth gate—an energetic

one—into sahasrara and the gate of Brahma. The mudra can be seen in the illustration below. The steps are as follows:

- In a meditation position, relax your body and inhale slowly and deeply. Now concentrate on each chakra for a few seconds.
- Cover your ears with your thumbs.
- Cover your eyes with your index fingers.
- Pinch your nostrils with your middle fingers.
- Press your lips together with your ring finger just above your top lip and your little finger below your lower lip.
- Breathe in and out slowly.[20]

Eleven Buddhist Mudras to Accomplish Any Goal

In Buddhism we find eleven mudras that compose the full range of energetic goals:[21]

EXERCISE: **Dhyani Mudra (also called Samadhi Mudra)**

Rest the back of your right hand on the palm of your left hand, lightly touching the tips of your thumbs together. Let your hands rest in your lap.

This mudra promotes deep meditation and cleanses energetic impurities.[22]

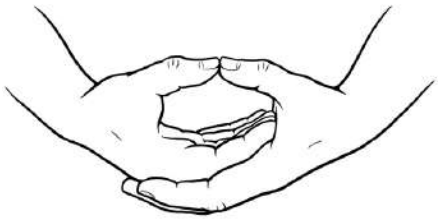


ILLUSTRATION 21—DHYANI OR SAMADHI MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Vitarka Mudra**

With your palms facing forward in front of your body, point your right hand upward at shoulder level and your left hand downward at hip level, with the thumbs and index fingers of both hands forming a circle.

Extend your fingers as shown in the image. This mudra transmits teachings.[23]

ILLUSTRATION 22—VITARKA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Dharmachakra Mudra**

Turn your left palm toward your body and your right palm away from it. Create a circle by touching the thumbs and index fingers of one hand to the other. This mudra evokes the wheel of dharma, or cosmic order.[24]

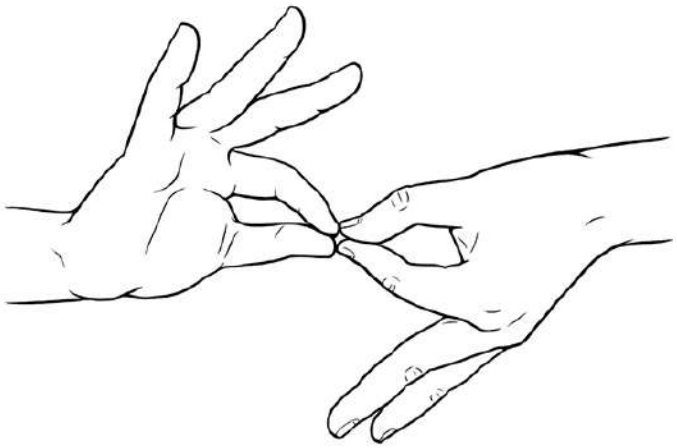


ILLUSTRATION 23—DHARMACHAKRA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Bhumisparsha Mudra**

With your left hand resting palm up on your lap, let your right hand hang over your knee, palm downward. Also called "Touching the Earth," this mudra depicts the hand gestures the Buddha made upon achieving enlightenment.[25]

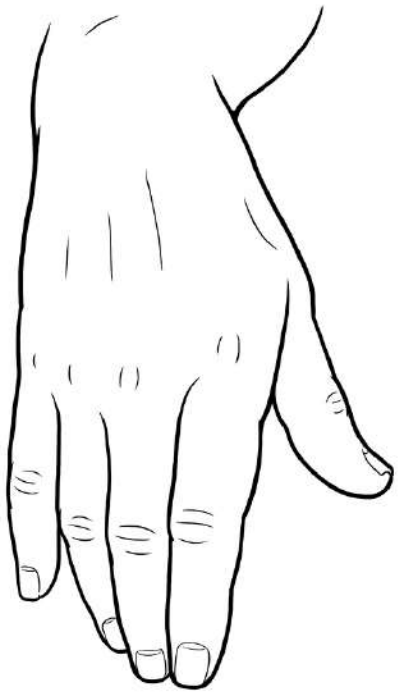


ILLUSTRATION 24—BHUMISPARSHA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Abhaya Mudra**

Raise your right hand to shoulder height with your fingers extended, wrist bent, and palm forward. This mudra creates fearlessness and provides protection.[26]

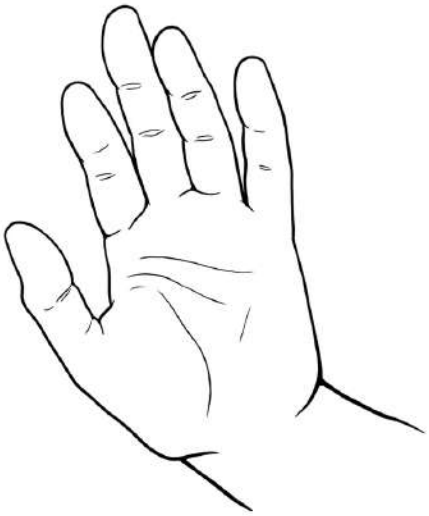


ILLUSTRATION 25—ABHAYA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Varada Mudra**

Extend your right hand forward, palm out and fingers pointed down. This "boon-granting mudra" bestows the energy of compassion and liberation.[27]

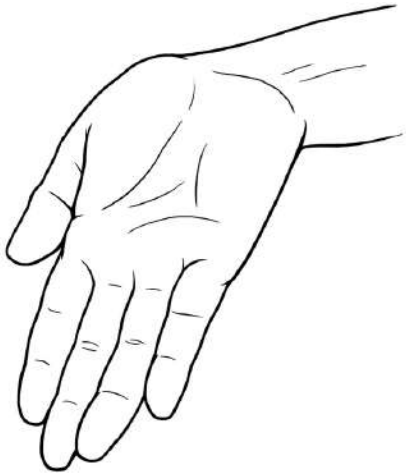


ILLUSTRATION 26—VARADA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Uttarabodhi Mudra**

Raise both hands to your chest, also raising your index fingers, which should touch each other. Cross your other fingers and fold them down.

Your thumbs can touch at the tips or be crossed and folded, as you can see in the illustration. This is the mudra of enlightenment.[28]

ILLUSTRATION 27—UTTARABODHI MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Mudra of Supreme Wisdom**

Grasp your right index finger with all the fingers of your left hand to encourage access to divine wisdom and the realization of unity.[29]

ILLUSTRATION 28—MUDRA OF SUPREME WISDOM ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Anjali Mudra (also called Namaskara Mudra)**

Place your palms together at your chest. With this mudra you greet the Divine in everyone.[30]

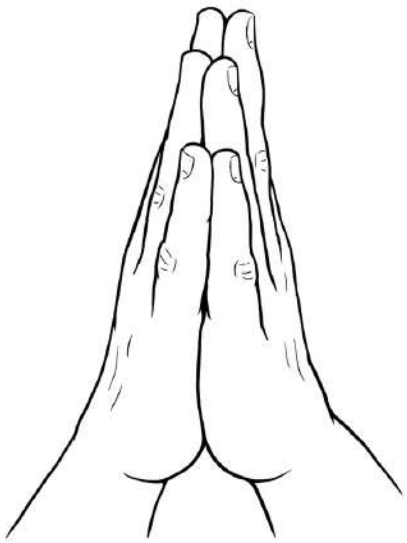


ILLUSTRATION 29—ANJALI OR NAMASKARA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Vajrapradama Mudra**

Cross the fingertips of both of your hands. Many practitioners recommend setting your joined hands upon your heart. This mudra grants unshakeable confidence.[31]

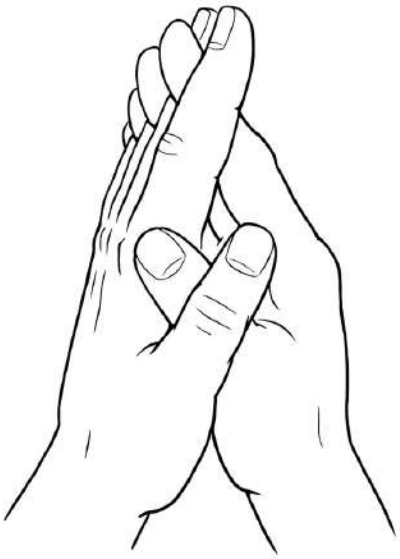


ILLUSTRATION 30—VAJRAPRADAMA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Karana Mudra**

Hold up your right hand at shoulder level, and touch your middle finger and thumb. Keep your ring finger next to your middle finger and slightly raise your little and index fingers. This mudra wards off evil.[32]

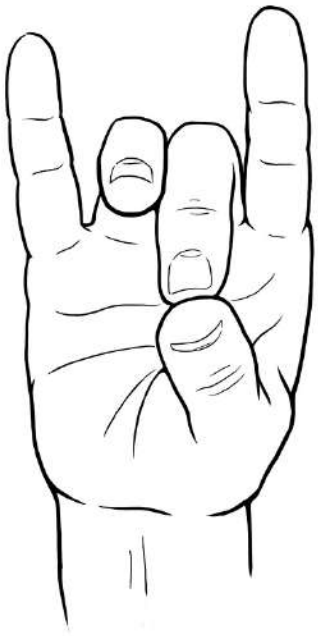


ILLUSTRATION 31—KARANA MUDRA ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Making Use of the Eyes

As you have noticed, mudras may involve the eyes, a special focus in chakra medicine. The eyes play a special role in the journey of enlightenment, in addition to being a critical organ related to the physical body and the sixth chakra. Not only do our eyes enable us to see reality, but they also enable us to see through it—sometimes right into the heavens.

Secret of the Golden Flower

One of the most fascinating treatises about the spiritual nature of the eyes is called *Secret of the Golden Flower*.[33] This esoteric knowledge was passed down orally for centuries before being written down on wooden tablets in the eight century CE and then later recorded by Lu Yen, a Taoist adept and leader of the Religion of Light. It is a unique window into spirituality in that it

embraces several ancient paths. Rooted in the Persian Zarathustra tradition (Zoroastrianism), it also has origins in Egyptian Hermeticism and features ideas found in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and even elements of Christianity.

At its heart, this manuscript outlines a path toward illumination that is centered on silent meditation techniques and the circulation of the essential breath energy. It features an approach originally taught at the beginning of "form," or manifested reality, when people knew how to use the powers of heaven. The eyes play a critical role in the method this scripture presents; in order to "circulate light," the practitioner cultivates the appearance of a bright image in front of the midpoint between the eyes. This image is called mandala, original essence, golden flower, and original light.

The eyes are considered of such importance because they can receive our negative thoughts, hence operating as a secret "heavenly heart." In this guise, the two eyes represent the sun and moon. A practitioner who can perceive this light fully passes through the gate and can start embodying the immortal essence.[34]

EXERCISE: **Activating the Eyes**

In my reading of "The Secret of the Golden Flower," I perceive the following steps to activating the eyes:

- Sit in an upright and comfortable position.
- Sink your eyelids halfway so as to look down your nose. In Taoism, this guiding line is called the "yellow middle"; in Buddhism, the "center in the midst of conditions." In this practice, the guiding line is the point exactly between your eyes, although this is only a symbolic representation of the light available anywhere and everywhere.
- Allow the light to stream into the eyes without forcing it.
- Suspend your thoughts, letting yourself forget all your concerns.
- Allow the light to shift downward.

If the light doesn't seem to be entering your eyes or circulating through your body, listen to your breath until it stops sounding ragged or rough. As it is said, "When the heart is light, the breathing is light."[35]

Trataka

Another process for cultivating the power of the eyes is a Buddhist one called *trataka*, or eye gazing. This method stimulates ajña, although some sources also maintain that it opens the pineal gland. Moreover, it bolsters our ability to concentrate and therefore strengthens meditation.

There are two types of trataka. One is an outer practice called *bahiranga* and the other is *antaranga*, an inner practice. In bahiranga, the focus is on an object, dot, or person outside of yourself. In antaranga, inner visualization is the key; for instance, you can perform antaranga by imagining your chakras. Either form of trataka can be conducted for fifteen minutes or so.

EXERCISE: **Trataka**

A simple way to perform outer trataka is to sit in a darkened room in a comfortable meditative position. Place a lit candle about two feet away, positioning it at eye level. Close your eyes and relax, making sure to keep your spine long but not stiff. Once you are fully comfortable, become still, open your eyes, and gaze at the brightest spot of the flame. Close your eyes if they become tired or the image blurs, but continue to see the afterglow image that remains. When this vision fades, open your eyes and stare at the candle again. The goal is to work up to peering at the flame for several minutes without blinking your eyes.

The practice is especially beneficial for people suffering for insomnia and mental disarray and can be done a few minutes before bedtime to help with these issues. Outer trakata can alleviate certain eye problems such as nearsightedness and clear the mind. One thought about its effectiveness is that the stomach and gallbladder meridians flow around

the eyes. During trataka these meridians are stimulated, and the resulting calm is transmitted to the manipura chakra, the mental center.

Yogis practice trataka with many objects and even with people, such as gazing at the full moon or into the eyes of a beloved guru. These practices can be directed toward the development of psychic powers but should be undertaken under the watchful care of a teacher, as they can be misused.[36]

The Four Bandhas

The bandhas are yoga moves that help you regulate your internal systems, from endocrine to digestive. They stimulate your life energy and help release chakra and subtle energy blocks, inviting the flow of kundalini and prana. In Sanskrit, the word means to "lock," "hold," or "tighten," and that's the nature of these asanas. They are often accompanied by various mudras and coordinated with pranayama techniques.

There are three primary bandhas, which are frequently done as a sequence, and one that ties them all together. The simplest descriptions of these follow:

EXERCISE: **Mula Bandha**

Mula means "root," so this is the root lock. You can conduct the exercise while sitting, standing, or in an asana (pose). To perform it, contract the area between your anus and testes if you are a man; if you are a woman, contract the muscles at the base of your pelvic floor, behind your cervix, as if stopping urination while performing a Kegel exercise. The lock allows your energy to flow up your spine without leaking out. It is useful for the genital, excretory, and endocrine systems and pelvic nerves, and it relieves constipation and depression.

EXERCISE: **Uddiyana Bandha**

Uddiyana means to "fly up" or "rise up." This bandha, therefore, allows your energy to move up into your abdomen, diaphragm, and stomach.

Practice this bandha by standing with your feet about three feet apart. Inhale through your nose and stretch your arms up along your ears. Exhale from your mouth and bend forward, placing your hands just above your knees. Without breathing, close your lips, straighten your elbows, and sense your abdominal wall and organs pushing toward your spine. Stay in this position for as long as you can, then exit by inhaling through your nose and standing up straight again. Raise your arms alongside your ears and exhale through your nose as you return your arms to your sides.

This practice is especially beneficial for anyone with abdominal or stomach ills. It also increases your metabolism and relieves stress and tension.

EXERCISE: **Jalandhara Bandha**

This bandha gives you permission to create a double chin. In Sanskrit, *jal* means "throat," *jalan* means "net," and *dharan* is "stream" or "flow." This bhanda is a throat lock, and it helps you control the flow of energy through your neck.

Conduct this exercise by sitting up tall. You can cross your legs or rest your sitting bones on your heels. Place your hands palms down on your knees. Inhale through your nose and bring your chin toward your neck. Lift your sternum a little and then press your hands down and straighten your elbows. Push your chin down farther and hold this position for as long as you can. You can move your hands into mudra poses at this point, if you desire. To exit, lift your chin, inhale as fully as possible, and then exhale.

This bandha compresses your sinuses and can therefore help regulate your circulatory and respiratory systems. The pressure on your throat can boost your thyroid and metabolism. It is also an excellent practice for instantly alleviating stress and anger.

EXERCISE: **Maha Bandha**

Maha means "great," and that is the nature of this bandha, which combines the previous three locks.

To conduct this bandha, sit comfortably on your shins and put the palms of your hands on your thighs or knees. Inhale deeply through your nose and then exhale, also through your nose. Perform the mula bandha. Still squeezing, enter into the uddiyana bandha. Inhale, lift your chest, and enter the jalandhara bandha. Hold, pressing your palms down, for as long as you can. Exit by lifting your head, fully inhaling, and releasing all the bandhas. This combined bandha provides the benefits of all three individual components.[37]

Chakra-Focused Asanas

Asanas are a vital part of every yoga practice. Many asanas bolster one chakra more than another. Laura Barat, a Vedic astrologer and author, recommends specific asanas to rebalance specific chakras and open them to just the right flow of heavenly energy.[38] They all come from Hatha yoga, a branch of yoga that cultivates the rising of kundalini for the achievement of enlightenment. Here I have selected one of the many asanas she recommends for each chakra.

Note that Barat's system does not include a recommendation for the seventh chakra. This is fairly typical, as the seventh chakra is considered beyond the bounds of physicality. So instead I have featured a simple yogic pose that will boost your seventh chakra.

EXERCISE: **First Chakra Pose: Virabhadrasana I (Warrior I)**

Warrior poses create heat, open the hips, and strengthen the legs. This makes them wonderful first chakra exercises. Virabhadrasana I is an ideal pose for promoting confidence as well as boosting your first chakra.

ILLUSTRATION 32—FIRST CHAKRA POSE: The first chakra pose, virabhadrasana I, is also called warrior I pose. This pose connects you to the earth and moves prana up your body. Visualize red while performing it to bolster its effectiveness. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

- Start in mountain pose, which involves standing straight, feet securely planted, legs together, back straight, and arms at your sides.
- On an exhale, move your left foot back three to four feet behind you.
- Turn your left foot in at a 45-degree angle and keep your right foot in front of you, toes pointing toward the front of your mat.
- Put your hands on your hips and bend your right knee so your thigh runs parallel to the mat and your knee is aligned over your heel.
- Root the outer edge of your left foot into your mat and rotate your hips and shoulders forward so your weight is on your bent right leg.
- Inhale and extend your arms above your head, perpendicular to the ground. Keep them wide open as if reaching for the sky, shoulder-width apart and parallel to each other.

- With your palms facing down, draw your shoulder blades down and away from your neck.
- Exhale and contract your abdominal muscles, tilting your hips and tucking in your tailbone. Make sure your right knee is bent in a way that aligns it over your heel.
- Continue to breathe, applying a bit more pressure on your right heel rather than the toes. This will stabilize your right knee and ease the knee joint. Imagine that your pubic bone is lifting toward your navel.
- You can strengthen this pose by pressing your outer left heel into the floor; you will feel an uplifting energy moving up through your left leg, into your hips, and into your arms. Remain in this position for thirty seconds to one minute.
- Throughout the duration of the pose, keep your neck loose and your head looking straight ahead; alternatively, tilt your head back to gaze at your thumbs.
- To exit, exhale while lowering your arms and put your hands back on your hips. Inhale while pressing into your right heel and step your left foot forward. Exhale while taking your hands off your hips, adjust your feet, and return to mountain pose.
- Take a few breaths and perform this pose with the opposite leg behind you for the same amount of time.

This first chakra pose strengthens your shoulders and arms, thighs and ankles, and back muscles. It expands your chest, increases stamina in your core muscles, improves balance, and stimulates your abdominal organs. Take caution if you have heart problems, high blood pressure, or balance problems. If you have shoulder pain, keep your hands open and arms parallel to avoid shoulder joint compression, and if you have discomfort in your neck, look forward and keep your chin parallel to the ground.[39]

ILLUSTRATION 33—SECOND CHAKRA POSE: The second chakra pose, parivrtta trikonasana, is also called twisting or revolved triangle pose. This pose activates the sacral chakra and therefore your creativity and emotions. Imagine orange flowing through your body for an increased effect. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Second Chakra Pose: Parivrtta Trikonasana (Twisting Triangle Pose)**

Barat suggests a pose called twisting triangle for the second chakra. If twisting triangle is too difficult, go with the simpler triangle pose, which omits the twisting.

- Stand in mountain pose. On an exhale, step your feet into a wide stance, about four feet apart. Raise your arms parallel to the floor at your sides, palms down.
- Turn your left foot in between 45 and 60 degrees to the right and your right foot 90 degrees to the right. Align your right heel with your left heel in a straight line. Turn your right thigh outward so that the center of your right knee is in line with the center of your right ankle.

- Inhale and grow long through your spine. Exhaling, turn your torso to the right. Align the points of your hips with your mat and extend them. Bring your left hip to the right, shift the top of this thigh bone back, and dig your left heel into the mat. Lean over your right leg and reach your left hand down, resting it on the inside or outside of your right foot, your shin, on a block, or on the floor, whichever is most comfortable for you.
- Stretch your right arm toward the ceiling. Keep your head in a neutral position, eyes front, or turn your head and gaze up toward your right hand. Align your body in a plane, not bending forward or backward, with your chest and pelvis open.
- Breathe, increasing the stretch on each exhale as you are able. Hold the pose between thirty seconds and a minute.
- Come out of the pose on an inhale. Return your arms to your sides and straighten your feet. Repeat on the other side.

This pose is beneficial for relieving digestive problems, lower backache, and sciatica. It is also good for relieving stress and anxiety. Avoid this pose if you have migraines, low blood pressure, headaches, diarrhea, insomnia, or spinal conditions.[40]

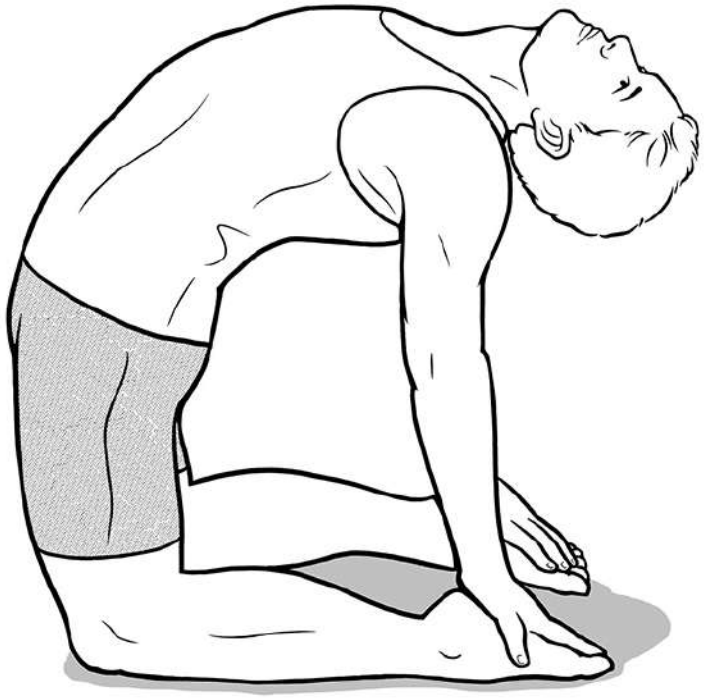


ILLUSTRATION 34—THIRD CHAKRA POSE: The third chakra pose, ustrasana, is also called camel pose. This pose expands your solar plexus center to aid in everything from digestion to activation of your personal power. It also awakens your heart chakra. Visualize yellow to further energize the third chakra. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Third Chakra Pose: Ustrasana (Camel Pose)**

This asana is similar to a backbend. It assists the third chakra as well as several others. Directions are as follows:

- Warm up your back by moving around for a while. Loosen up your shoulders and arms, raise your legs up, wiggle your hips.
- Kneel on the floor or a mat with your knees hip-width apart and your thighs perpendicular to the floor. Make sure the soles of your feet face upward and your toenails touch the ground.
- Place your palms on your lower back and breathe deeply.
- Lean backward, keeping your hips pressed forward so they are over your knees. Keep your tailbone slightly tucked under.
- Tuck your toes while leaning back, and move your hands to your heels. If you are really flexible you can slowly release your head

back, being careful with your neck. You can also keep your head in a neutral position, neither flexed nor extended, or drop it back.

- Remain in this pose between thirty seconds and a minute. To exit, bring your hands to the front of your pelvis at the hip bones. Inhale and lift your head and torso up by pushing your hip points down toward the floor. If your head is back, lead with your chest to come up. Rest for a few breaths and come completely out of the pose.

This pose is known for toning the limbs and strengthening the chest, abdomen, and thighs. It can improve the state of most of your bodily systems, from digestive to endocrine, and is helpful for asthma, bronchitis, diabetes, thyroid and parathyroid disorders, and many intestinal and genitourinary disorders. It will also reduce fat on the thighs, loosen the vertebrae, and release tension in the genital glands. Do not do this pose if you have high or low blood pressure, migraines, insomnia, or serious low back or neck injuries.[41]

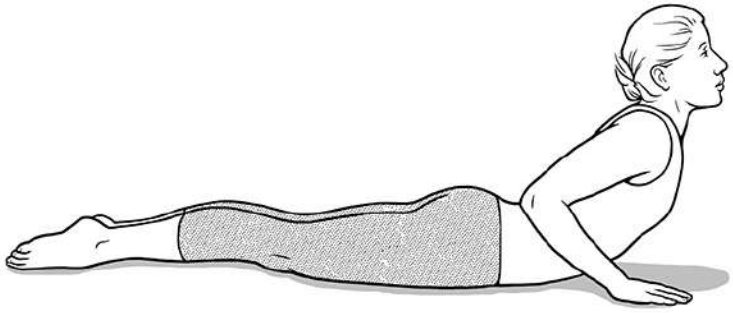


ILLUSTRATION 35—FOURTH CHAKRA POSE: The fourth chakra pose, bhujangasana, is also called cobra pose. This pose stretches open the heart chakra and unifies body and soul. Picturing green streaming through your body while performing this pose will invite healing on every level. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Fourth Chakra Pose: Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)**

This well-known asana is ideal for optimizing the healing powers of the heart chakra in that it emphasizes your chest, inviting a deepening of your breathing. This balance point between the lower and higher chakras allows the increased flow of love to heal everything from grievances to physical heart disorders. Perform it this way:

- Lie on your stomach on the floor or a mat with your legs and the tops of your feet resting on the floor. Using your back muscles to lift your torso, place your hands palms down on the floor under your shoulders, your upper arms perpendicular to the floor, and hug your elbows toward the side of your body as you keep your forearms on the floor. This is actually an asana in itself, called Sphinx Pose. Exhale.
- Press the tops of your feet, thighs, and pubic area into the floor.
- Inhale and straighten your arms, lifting your chest off the floor. Stop while your pubic bone is still resting on the floor.
- Press your tailbone toward your pubic area and lift the pubis toward your navel, then firm your shoulder blades toward the spine and expand your ribs. Lift the top of your body as if through the top of your sternum—but don't push your front ribs forward. Feel the bend distributed throughout your spine.
- Hold this pose for fifteen to thirty seconds.
- Release the pose with an exhalation.

The cobra opens your chest, strengthens your spine, and firms your buttocks. It can be good for sciatica and asthma; as ancient texts suggest, it increases bodily heat, awakens kundalini, and eliminates disease. Avoid this pose if you have an injured back, carpal tunnel syndrome, or headaches.[42]

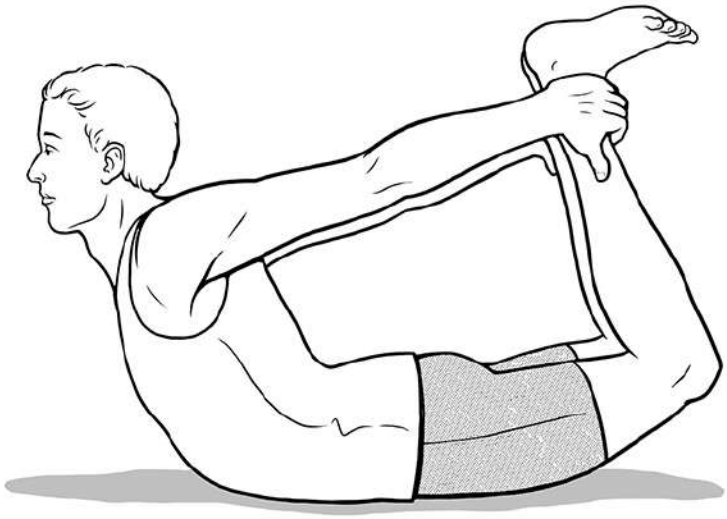


ILLUSTRATION 36—FIFTH CHAKRA POSE: The fifth chakra pose, dhanurasana, is also called bow pose. This pose will move energy through your throat, connecting all parts of your body for expressive communication. When in this pose, consider visualizing blue energy flowing like water through your body. You can also hum or tone to further open this chakra. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Fifth Chakra Pose: Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)**

A good fifth chakra asana is called bow pose.

- Lie on your belly with your feet hip-width apart, arms resting at your sides.
- Bend your knees and grasp your ankles with your hands.
- On an inhale, left your chest off the floor and pull your legs up as high as is comfortable. The body will resemble the smooth curve of a bow. Keep your legs together instead of splaying out. Squeeze your inner thighs.
- To release from the pose, slowly lower the legs until the knees are on the floor, then lower the torso.

This exercise strengthens your legs and hips, massages the spine, opens the heart, improves blood circulation, helps regulate the sexual glands, directs oxygen to the upper part of the body, and rejuvenates the entire body. Do not do this if you have kidney issues, neck injuries, cervical spondylitis, arteriosclerosis, or glaucoma.[43]

ILLUSTRATION 37—SIXTH CHAKRA POSE: The sixth chakra pose, adho mukha svanasana, is also called downward facing dog. You will experience increased blood and subtle energy to the third eye during this pose, cultivating your clairvoyant and observational powers. Visualize purple energy moving through your body while in this pose and disengage from limiting thoughts. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Sixth Chakra Pose: Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward Facing Dog)**

This pose, also called downward facing dog, uses the push-pull dynamics of yoga. Steps are as follows:

- Come to the floor on your hands and knees. Your knees should be directly below your hips and your hands a tad in front of your shoulders. Spread your palms and press the balls of your feet into the floor.
- Exhale and lift your knees away from the floor, initially keeping them slightly bent, with your heels lifted off the floor. Lengthen your tailbone away from the back of the pelvis and press it toward your pubis.
- On the next exhale push the tops of your thighs back, stretching your heels toward the floor. Simultaneously straighten your knees but don’t lock them. Firm up your outer thighs and roll your upper thighs inward just a bit.

- Tightening your outer arms, press the bases of your index fingers into the floor. Now lift up along your inner arms between your wrists to the top of your shoulders, firming your shoulder blades against your back before widening them to draw them toward your tailbone.
- Keep your head between your upper arms.
- Hold for several deep breaths and then exit the pose.

Downward dog relieves stress and energizes your body, relieving menstrual symptoms, preventing osteoporosis, improving digestion, and relieving headaches, insomnia, back pain, high blood pressure, sinusitis, and more. This pose is not advised if you are pregnant or have diarrhea, ear or eye infections, carpal tunnel syndrome, high blood pressure, or a headache.[44]

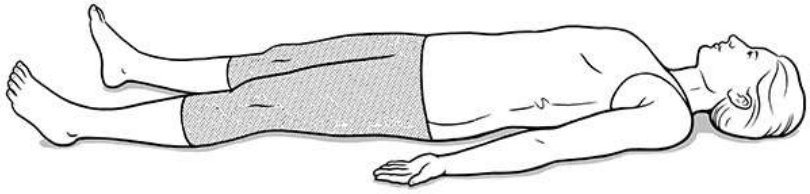


ILLUSTRATION 38—SEVENTH CHAKRA POSE: The seventh chakra pose, savasana, is also called corpse pose. While in corpse pose, sense your connection to the ground and allow this secure feeling to free you from fears inhibiting the seventh chakra's white light.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Seventh Chakra Pose: Savasana (Corpse Pose)**

This asana calms and balances. It is often practiced at the end of a yoga session for relaxation and integration. Directions are as follows:

- Lie on your back on the floor.
- Stretch your legs and spread them a natural and comfortable width apart.
- Draw your shoulder blades under while tilting your chin toward your chest. Now relax your shoulders and chin and let go.
- Let your arms fall by your sides in a comfortable position.

- Visualize the pulsing of your seventh chakra.

This pose calms your brain and body, lowering blood pressure and reducing fatigue and insomnia. Do not do it if it causes discomfort, if you have a back injury, or if you are pregnant.[45]

Bridging past and present, we have mined Eastern chakra medicine techniques to support chakra healing and balancing. From Patanjali, a famous yogi from the past, we have borrowed and updated practices including the yamas and niyamas. We've added age-old processes including pranayama, mudras, and eye exercises, as well as yoga *bandhas,* or moves. We've also included *asanas* (yoga postures), adding a special twist. All of this we've done to bring time-tested chakra medicine practices into your home and world.

We now move into an additional chapter of chakra practices, one that blends West and East in a plethora of approaches.

[contents]

Chakra Techniques

FROM MANTRAS TO GEMSTONES AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

> SCARS ARE NOT injuries…A scar is a healing. After injury, a scar is what makes you whole.
>
> CHINA MIÉVILLE

In the last two chapters we've concentrated on preparatory practices, followed by Western and then Eastern chakra medicine methods. We now meet in the middle, embracing East and West and drawing from a vast number of cultures and alternative healing modalities.

Here we will explore a variety of ways to work with the chakras, first learning about mantras: sounding practices that harness the music of the spheres. We'll then focus on the use of shapes, Reiki, archetypes, and so much more, until we find that our chakra medicine tool kit is quite replete, and we discover that there is nothing that cannot be touched by chakra care. While chakras hold the memories and causes of our wounds, they also contain the antidote.

Mantras and More: The Music of the Spheres

Chakra medicine has always employed sound as a means of influencing the subtle energy that flows through and among the chakras. Sounds can be made in the form of prayer, incantations, magic spells, hymns, evocations of gods, phrases, tones, syllables, or reciting scripture. In this section we will look at several types of chakra sounds: mantras, seed syllables, and octave notes.

About Mantras

Mantras are sacred verbal formulas designed to enhance our spiritual practice. In ancient Vedic and tantric texts, mantras and the rituals surrounding them were quite complex. The verbal formulas usually contained the name of a seer, focused on a presiding deity, featured a metrical unit or inner rhythm, and had a purpose. Sometimes syllables or parts of the mantra would be "deposited" on parts of the practitioner's body while he or she visualized the deity. Longer mantras were even more complicated than this.

Traditionally—and even today—spiritual practitioners may receive a mantra from a guru during an initiation ceremony. The specific assignment of a mantra prevents a practitioner from using an unsuitable one, or even a sound that might do harm. Hindu tantra uses diagrams to compare the syllables in a subject's name with the syllables of the mantra to make sure that they are complementary. Astrological charts can also be used as the basis for a comparison. A mantra might then be "purified" to make sure it has no defects, a process that includes visualizing how it affects the chakras.[1]

In modern times, most people employ known mantras or make up their own.

How can you best decide how to obtain or use a mantra? Here are some points to consider:

- Will you select or write your own or receive one from a guru or teacher?
- How often will you use the mantra?
- At what time of day will you recite the mantra?
- How many times will you repeat it? (Many people use rosaries or mala beads to keep track of the count.)
- Do you want to use another practice with the mantra or maybe even include an element? (Tantric traditions use water libations or chanting before a fire.)
- Will you repeat the mantra aloud, in a whisper, or mentally?
- Do you also want to use visualizations (yantras)?
- Is there a chakra you want to concentrate on as you chant?

Know also that there are many forms mantra recitation can take. You can recite each syllable beginning with *om*, for example, or write down the mantra and sprinkle it with your version of holy water, or perhaps flower petals, before reciting it. You can also repeat it secretly through a process called "concealing," keeping your words private.[2]

Seed Syllables

Putting aside all of these complications, there are two very simple ways to perform a mantra to effect chakra transformation. You can intone the Hindu seed syllable for each chakra from the chapters of part 2 (repeated here for you in the following chart) or you can use the note of the octave that is usually associated with each. These same sounds can be used to clear, balance, and attune the auric fields that relate to each chakra.

When you work with octave notes, you can expand toning beyond the natural range of your voice by using crystal or Tibetan bowls, tuning forks, musical instruments, or other means of creating music. You can also accompany the process with drumming, flutes, dancing, or any other form of expression you choose.

After you decide how you want to work with either the Hindu seed syllables or octave sounds, you can use the following sounds for each chakra:

CHAKRA	HINDU SEED SYLLABLE/ PRONUNCIATION	OCTAVE NOTE
First	Lam/"lum"	C
Second	Vam/"vum"	D
Third	Ram/"rum"	E
Fourth	Yam/"yum"	F
Fifth	Ham/"hum"	G
Sixth	Om/long O sound	A
Seventh	None	B

EXERCISE: **The Gayatri Mantra**

The Gayatri mantra is probably the most popular Sanskrit mantra. Its origin is linked to the goddess Gayatri, called *Veda-Mata,* or "Mother

of the Vedas." To chant this mantra and adhere to your divine path blesses you with a life of joy.

The mantra consists of twenty-four syllables arranged in triplets of eight syllables each. You can repeat them in whatever way you are moved to—aloud, during meditation, spoken into your hand, while singing, or even while you clean the house.

Aum
Bhuh Bhuva Svah
Tat Savitur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi
Dhiyo Yo nah Prachodayat
—*Rig Veda* (10:16:3)

Here is a modern way to interpret this mantra: *O Divine Mother, our hearts are filled with darkness. Please make this darkness distant from us and promote illumination within us*.[4]

Yantras: The Shapes and Colors of Light

Yantras are visual tools for meditative focus. They differ from mantras in an obvious way, being visual instead of verbal. The energetic distinction, however, is that a tantric yantra represents the form of a deity while a mantra links us with the consciousness of a deity or spiritual concept.[5]

From a Hindu point of view, we focus on a yantra to receive a transmission. The more completely we can lose ourselves in the yantra, the more the archetypal phenomenon that is embedded within it can help us find ourselves. Every desire and every need can be unlocked when we fall into the yantra's sacred shape.

Yantras aren't only a Hindu concept. In Islamic tantric tradition *naqush*, or rectangular yantras, are used in conjunction with the names of Allah.[6] Buddhists, Tibetans, and Asian cultures have always employed their own holy images for healing and manifesting, as have the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Mayans, and Hebrews, and contemporary mystics continue to create beauty that is held within visual form. One such example is the work

of Dr. Ibrahim Karim, whose use of color and shape composes a system called BioGeometry. His yantralike designs have been proven to accomplish everything from healing diseases to growing larger-than-life produce.[7]

From the Hindu perspective, there are four types of yantras: yantras representing deities, astrological yantras to harness the energy of the planets, architectural yantras (used in designing sacred sites), and numerical yantras, which combine numbers as a way to evoke power.[8] And, as you have learned throughout the discussion of Hindu chakras in part 2, there are also yantras specific to each one of your spinning wheels.

EXERCISE: **Employing a Yantra**

The basic steps of employing a yantra—whether for visualization, meditation, pranayama, or to balance the chakras—are the same:

Prepare

This step includes selecting a yantra based on your intention and goals. Factors may include preference, need, color, shape, chakra, astrological sign, and event. Many people draw their yantras or visualize them. They can also be inscribed on amulets, metal plates, or paper or in sand. Traditionally yantras were considered three-dimensional objects drawn in two-dimensional space; therefore, you can think of all yantras as three-dimensional.

Infuse

Infusing a yantra charges it with spiritual energy. It can be infused with intention, holy water, or a blessing from a holy person, or through prayer by a deity or the Divine. The traditional requirement is that anyone who infuses the yantra must be pure of heart.

Use

A yantra can be held as an object of focus during meditation, placed in the environment, or worn as jewelry. If it is in amulet form, ancient tantric tradition suggests that you suspend it from a copper, gold, or cotton chain or thread. Some recommend soaking the yantra in water all night and then drinking the water—as long as you avoid plastic or

> aluminum vessels or anything else with dangerous properties. You can also hold or visualize a yantra directly on your body where needed, right over a chakra, or on the soles of your feet.[9]

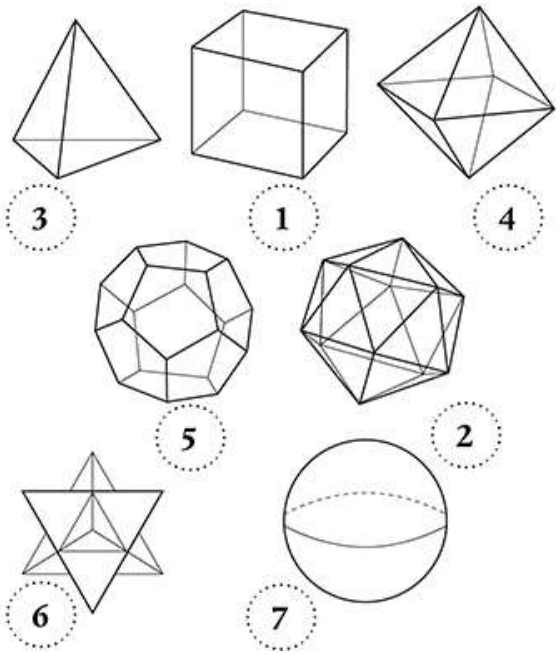
The most potent qualities of a yantra are its shapes and colors. All visualized or prepared yantras contain both, and these are traditionally selected with great care. Nearly every ancient tradition understood that shapes and colors determine the energy of everything, not just the potency of a sacred tool. Recently, colors and shapes have emerged as being potentially even more fundamental than what previously had been considered the foundations of reality: particles and fields.

The newest theory is that the world consists of bundles of properties—colors and shapes—at baseline. In other words, the relationship *between* things is more essential than the things themselves. Instead of the notion that shape, color, consistency, and other apparent components of reality emerge from particles and fields, the opposite might be true. In other words, it is the property or quality that determines what will appear in physical reality.[10]

One of the terms used to describe the power of shape is sacred geometry, which has been part of many cultures across time. Geometry—or shape—has been used in the construction of religious structures, holy sites built in nature, jewelry, altars, healing instruments, and more.[11] One of the more famous renderings of sacred geometry is the Platonic solids, five shapes deemed the basis of all universal creation. Discovered by the Pythagoreans around 450 BCE, they were part of Plato's teaching repertoire during the same century. It is likely that the Egyptians contributed to the Greeks' knowledge.[12]

More recently, these five shapes and their correlated elements have been identified with the lower five chakras. I have included these associations as well as the shapes frequently linked with the top two chakras. To use this information, you can meditate or do pranayama or asanas while concentrating on linking the shapes and elements to a selected chakra. You can also surround yourself with a shape or make use of its associated element when performing chakra medicine on a particular chakra.

1 CUBE (CHAKRA 1)
2 ICOSAHEDRON (CHAKRA 2)
3 TETRAHEDRON (CHAKRA 3)
4 OCTAHEDRON (CHAKRA 4)
5 DODECAHEDRON (CHAKRA 5)
6 MERKABAH (CHAKRA 6)
7 SPHERE (CHAKRA 7)



CHAKRA	PLATONIC SOLID	MEANING	ELEMENT
First	Hexahedron or cube	Solidarity and foundation	Earth
Second	Icosahedron	Transformation	Water
Third	Tetrahedron	Manifestation	Fire
Fourth	Octahedron	Integration and love	Air
Fifth	Dodecahedron	Ascension and mystery	Ether
Sixth	Merkaba	Interdimensional travel	None
Seventh	Sphere	Wholeness and oneness	None[13]

As you learned in parts 1 and 2, each chakra has a related color or colors. In themselves, colors are powerful healing tools to include in yantras. They can also be employed as stand-alone means for performing chakra medicine.

The easiest way to use colors with your chakras is to use the "Chakra Clearing with Intuitive Meditation" exercise on page 224 or work directly on the chakras. You can visualize the color of each chakra while meditating; wear the color that will bolster your weakest chakra; or use lights, cloth, or colored yantras while focusing on a chakra. As well, you can use gemstones (as we will cover in this chapter) or other tools in your chakra medicine bag. But you don't have to match the chakra's primary color in order to work with

it. Each color consists of its own frequency and because of this constitutes a vibrational remedy. If a chakra is lacking "oomph," you might consider adding red or another energizing hue. If the physical area around a chakra is inflamed, you have too much red and might want to soothe with a cool color. You can also use a pendulum, applied kinesiology, or your intuition to figure out the color to use for balance, methods that were discussed in chapter 12.

Following is a list of a few qualities each color holds:

Red: Power, passion, energy

Orange: Enthusiasm, stamina, adventure

Yellow: Inspires, awakens, adds optimism and intelligence

Green: Beauty, nature, healing capabilities

Blue: Cools, calms, integrates higher knowing

Purple: Visual intuition, powerful transformation

White: Purity and transcendence

Pink: Love, empowerment, affection

Silver: Receptivity, deflects negativity

Gold: Enlightenment, divine protection, highest good

Black: Draws in energy and transforms it

Earth Colors: Represents the wealth of nature [14]

Reiki Symbols for Your Chakras: Another Form of Yantras

Reiki is a Japanese healing technique that is administered through symbols and the laying-on of hands. You could compare the symbols of Reiki to Hindu yantras since both serve as energetic channels. Reiki work frequently includes chakras. Core to this healing art is the acknowledgement of an invisible life force or subtle energy that, when low or disturbed, causes imbalances.

For decades, most Reiki practitioners have learned the practice by earning a graduated set of certificates involving training and a process called attunements, in which the Reiki master transfers energy, much as does a Hindu guru. A symbol will attune what it is focused on as well. These days most information about Reiki is available over the Internet, and because it is available publicly I feel comfortable including basic practices here, although there is no substitute for learning from a Reiki teacher. I recognize, too, that you may feel you should not practice techniques on yourself or another unless you have received an attunement. Personally, I believe that our motivation is more important than extensive training—the intention of our heart is more important than our mind. I encourage you to do what feels right for you, however.

Many symbols are used in Reiki, each of which serves to hold the intention of a healer. These can be held in the mind, drawn on a chakra or part of the body with a finger, or sketched on paper as a focusing tool. Following is a description of three of the main symbols and then a process for a chakra balancing that uses these three symbols.

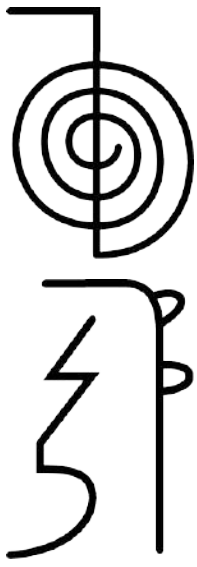


ILLUSTRATION 40—REIKI SYMBOLS: Cho Ku Rei (left), Sei Hei Ki (middle), and Raku (right). ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

The Power Reiki Symbol: Cho Ku Rei

Cho Ku Rei acts like a light switch, turning on healing energy and accelerating its progress. It can be used in two directions. When the coils are clockwise, Cho Ku Rei will assist with manifestation. When they are counterclockwise, they decrease power and aid in releasing. This symbol is often a good one for beginning a Reiki chakra healing.

The Harmony Reiki Symbol: Sei Hei Ki

This symbol is ideal for cleansing and purifying, providing mental and emotional healing as well as protection. Repelling negative energy, it burns out destructive forces, uplifts, and inspires. It often can be used as part of a chakra cleanse.

The Completion Reiki Symbol: Raku

Raku grounds and completes, participating in kundalini healing and chakra alignment. It is often used in the final stage of a Reiki attunement and can seal newly activated energies.[15]

EXERCISE: **A Reiki Chakra Practice**

- Relax and breathe deeply.
- Draw the Power symbol in your mind or with a finger on (or over) the related chakra. Decide whether the symbol should be coiled

clockwise (to add energy) or counterclockwise (to subtract energy). You can also establish it in one direction and then switch to another. Set the intention for this chakra to be cleaned or empowered.

- Now draw the Harmony symbol, allowing it to purify and harmonize the chakra energies.
- Next use the Completion symbol, sealing in the healing and a new layer of protection.
- Relax and complete the session.

Archetype Healing Through the Chakras

As we have already explored, during the last few decades chakra medicine has expanded to include archetypes. Archetypes are symbols that hold vibration. The effectiveness of their use for healing, personality development, and manifesting is based on the fact that our individual psyches are not only personal, they are *transpersonal*, extending beyond the individual.

A chakra's positive archetypes exalt its abilities and are life enhancing. The negative archetypes indicate undeveloped aspects of that chakra and may be seen as a stage of development we must work through in order to achieve the positive archetype. If a particular chakra (or a trait within it) is stuck in a negative archetype, we will experience dysfunctional physical, psychological, or spiritual conditions.

Remember that a negative archetype isn't entirely destructive. As was illuminated in the descriptions of the adverse archetypes associated with each chakra in Part 2, within the undesirable lies a silver lining—a trait that, if matured, can enable a blossoming into the constructive archetype and a healthier psychological or spiritual state, hence a happier chakra and life.

The following chakra-based exercise is one you perform on yourself. It is designed to help you shift a negative archetype into a positive one, gaining wisdom along the way. A chart of the chakras' positive and negative archtypes from chapters 4–10 is included for reference.

Chakra	Positive Archetype	Negative Archetype

First	Mother	Victim
Second	Emperor/Empress	Martyr
Third	Warrior	Servant
Fourth	Lover	Actor
Fifth	Communicator	Silent Child
Sixth	Intuitive	Intellectual
Seventh	Guru	Egotist

EXERCISE: **Archetype Meditation**

- Hone in on a chakra that you feel is imbalanced.
- Establish a calm, meditative state and pose, and concentrate on the negative archetype associated with this chakra.
- Imagine that this archetype is alive—that it is a distinct being with whom you can interact. Perceive it as hovering in front of you.
- Ask this archetype to tell you how it came to be. What experiences caused it to exist? What caused it to develop its negative characteristics? How did it seek to benefit from its immature attitudes or behaviors?
- Now ask the negative archetype what truth lies within it. What trait, energy, power, or knowledge does it hold deep inside, which if unlocked—if developed—could enhance your life? Ask the archetype what it requires in order to illuminate this positive quality and discard the negative package containing it.
- As this archetype begins to transform, seek out the associated positive archetype. Perceive it as an independent being. Invite it forth and ask it to stand next to the transforming archetype.
- Ask the positive archetype if it is willing to teach and instruct its "younger sibling," showing it how to further mature and grow, until both can merge.
- Ask these two merging beings to integrate back into the related chakra, and know that the chakra itself, as well as related aspects of your life, can now evolve.

• Take a few deep breaths and return to your everyday consciousness.

Homeopathy as Chakra Medicine

Homeopathy involves treating individuals with highly diluted substances to trigger the body's natural immunity. It is based on the principle "like with like," meaning that if you deliver more of the "problem" to the body, it will recognize the causal issue and take care of it.

Through homeopathy, practitioners work with *miasms*, defined as "energies of destiny" by English homeopathic expert Grahame Martin, who links homeopathic remedies with chakras in his book *Chakra Prescribing and Homeopathy*.[16]

A miasm is a force that pulls us into a state of disease or imbalance. Homeopathic remedies actually vibrate the miasms so they can be released or transformed. Miasms can emanate from the chakras and affect the related auric fields; therefore, to shift the chakra through related homeopathic remedies is to shift a number of miasms.

Following are a few of the remedies Martin recommends. He employs traditional homeopathics as well as some of the newer ones, which are often named for stones, places, or colors.[17] To make use of this information, you can obtain the homeopathic remedies from most holistic/medicinal stores or over the Internet and use them as directed. If you feel uncomfortable taking the drops internally, which is the traditional way of using homeopathy, you can put a few drops into a spritzer and spray the air around you with the solution. You can also mix a few drops of the homeopathic remedy in water and drop them on the areas of your body where the chakras they relate to are located.

First Chakra Homeopathy

Corrects Values in the Face of Materialism: Lycopodium and Silica

Becoming Embodied; Being Fully Present: Sulphur [18]

Grounding and Healing Adrenal Overdrive: Sulphur and Oak [19]

Second Chakra Homeopathy

Invading Entities and External Energies: Syphilinum Ayahuasca and Syphilinum[20]

Sexual Issues and Victim Issues: Thuja [21]

Third Chakra Homeopathy

Victim Issues Leading to Shyness, Anger, and Depression: Bay Leaf [22]

Carrying Out Desires: Ceanothus, Caesium [23]

Individuating Within a Constraining Society: Nux Vomica [24]

Fourth Chakra Homeopathy

Damage to the Thymus, such as from Vaccines: Hornbeam, Berlin Wall, and Thymus Gland [25]

Dealing with the Abyss, such as a Dark Night of the Soul: Ayahuasca, Chalice Well [26]

Freeing Self from Entities: Combination of Syphilinum, Ayahuasca, Holly Berry, and Moonstone [27]

Fifth Chakra Homeopathy

Uniting Upper Three Chakras to Dispel Fear and Illusion: Natrum Mur [28]

Expressing Quality Truths: Japanese Oleander (White) [29]

Desire to Control Others: Lachesis [30]

Sixth Chakra Homeopathy

Opening the Sixth Eye When Ready: Orange [31]

Perceiving the Nature of Miasms in Physical World: Thuja Occidentalis [32]

Support for Kundalini: Copper Beech [33]

Seventh Chakra Homeopathy

Capacity to Receive Sacred Guidance: Frankincense [34]

Opening to Light; Raising of Spiritual Awareness: Hornbeam [35]

Converting Negative Karma: Purple [36]

The Power of Flowers

Flowers naturally know how to seek light; they are made of spun light themselves, as well as earth, water, air, and hope. This is why flowers were often considered great teachers and healers in the ancient Vedic world and around the globe. As you have now seen in detail, the chakras are represented by lotus flowers, and many other types of flowers have been used to harmonize energy.

Many of the Vedic scriptures include ways to use flowers during worship. Flowers were often used as offerings made to the deities, and even now it's rare to find an altar in a Hindu temple, home, or sacred place that has not been brightened with them. Figures and statues of deities are often decorated with flowers and leaves, and confetti-like showers of flowers may accompany rituals. As well, specific flowers are associated with certain deities. In fact, one particular Hindu devotional rite called the *puja* is translated as "the flower act."[37]

One of the main sources of knowledge about the particular meanings and uses of flowers is the *Puranas, a collection of ancient Hindu texts*. One text called the *Skanda Purana Upakhyana* showcases ways to employ specific flowers to combat the darkness of the Kali Yuga. (An *upakhyana* is a description of something the speaker has not seen but only heard about.) Here we find a conversation between the sage Agastya, who is often consulted by deities and humans alike, describing how to use flowers during certain times of the month. For instance, during a specific type of *chandra ashtama*—a dangerous astrological time in our personal charts—Agastya tells his disciples that they can use garlands of chemparuthi (also called hibiscus) and jasmine flowers to deflect life-threatening events and transform darkness into opportunity for financial and sexual abundance and fame.[38]

The *Puranas* also outline several other flowers to be used for precise purposes. Some are specific to days of the week and others are used for

certain needs. If you can find the following flowers referred to in Hindu texts, you can employ them to your own advantage, such as by creating garlands, setting them on your altar space, holding one while meditating, or simply putting them in a vase. If you cannot find these flowers, concentrate on a picture of the flower or the energy of it while meditating, thinking of an issue, or performing any other type of chakra medicine. Because all objects are physical as well as subtle, accessing the subtle energy of a flower through intention is an influential technique.

Hindu Flowers Related to Days of the Week

Monday: Lily and jasmine for family unity

Tuesday: Arali (nerium oleander) and champangi for safety and protection

Wednesday: Pavizhamalli (coral jasmine) for memory

Thursday: Chamandi for financial success

Friday: Ramabhana (picchi; red is used for conception)

Saturday: Purple flowers will encourage success

Sunday: Pink and maroon flowers will enable friendship and enhance your personality

Hindu Flowers for Specific Results

The following can also be used in conjunction with Vedic astrological constellations; consult a Vedic site if you desire to do so.

Sunflower: Success in business

Drumstick Flower: Assuring a wise decision in purchasing a vehicle

Thazhamboo Flower: To buy gold and attend to a courtship

Mango Flower: Safe travels

Chamandhi Flower: Medical treatment

Neem Flower: Freedom from debt and loans

Magizham Flower: Release from black magic

Arali: For buying property

White Lotus: Alleviates shortage of clothing

Asoka: For matrimony [39]

Flower Essences

In addition to using flowers physically or visualizing them with intention, another way to attune to flowers is through the use of flower essences, substances that are prepared from parts of a flowering plant, shrub, or tree. These herbal infusions are used therapeutically with benefits at all levels: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. These tinctures contain the essence of the plant and are a form of vibrational medicine that helps us recognize our locked-in issues and clear them.

The best-known flower essences are the original Bach Flower Remedies. Discovered by Dr. Edward Bach, these thirty-nine remedies correct emotional imbalances and, in doing so, improve body, mind, and soul. Since Dr. Bach's work, dozens of other forms of flower essences have since been developed and marketed. One powerful line is Australian Bush Flower Essences, developed by naturopath Ian White. A fifth-generation Australian herbalist, White has developed remedies to help address contemporary concerns.[40] Whichever variety of flower essence you choose, it is recommended that you follow the guidelines set by the people who created them.

Bach Flower and Australian Bush Flower Essences recommended for specific chakras are listed in the "Chakra Flower Essences, Gemstones, and Oils" section later in this chapter.

The Lotus

And, of course, there is the magical lotus. This flower's sacred spirit represents eternity and purity and also serves as the symbol of life, creation, youthfulness, and feminine beauty within each of us.[41] It is frequently mentioned in texts as ancient as the *Rig Veda*. For chakra medicine purposes, it is beneficial to know that there are many lotus colors, each of which provides a different "flavor" of subtle energy. The padma lotus is pink, the

kamala is red, the pundariki is white, and the utpala lotus is blue.[42] The blue lotus is sometimes seen as purple, and in this shade it is quite sacred, as purple is so uncommon among lotus flowers. As well, according to a Hindu creation myth, the Supreme Being generated a thousand-petal gold lotus out of the primeval waters.[43]

Despite its exquisite beauty, the lotus grows in mud, thus representing our inherent ability to rise above our circumstances to achieve enlightenment. In Buddhist tradition, each color of lotus flower has a different meaning; as well, the various stages of the maturing lotus represent different aspects of our unfolding path of enlightenment. The following guided meditation makes use of this complex information, which I will present before I describe the meditation; this lotus meditation may be used for your chakras to produce dynamic effects.

Meanings Of Lotus Colors

Pink: History of Buddha and Buddhism

Red: Compassion and love

White: Purity of mind and spirit

Blue: Common sense, wisdom, and logic

Purple: Spirituality and mysticism

Gold: Achievement of enlightenment

Three Stages Of Lotus Development

In the Mud: The world into which we are born, full of suffering

Closed Lotus Flower: The time before enlightenment

Fully Bloomed Flower: Full enlightenment [44]

Exercise: **Lotus Meditation**

Settle into a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths, keeping your eyes closed. You can sit in a meditative pose and adopt a mudra if you desire.

Breathe deep into your belly, sensing the pulse of your breath all the way into your first chakra. Imagine that you are an unopened lotus and that your roots travel downward, through your legs and beyond your feet, planting themselves in the mud that composes the foundation of physical reality. Herein dwell those underdeveloped aspects of yourself.

Forgive yourself for having remained caught in the lowest plane of existence, in the mud that traps you in suffering and discouragement. Rather, look at what you have gained and learned.

When you've made peace with yourself, allow the Divine to breathe over this self with six colors in sequence, each hue providing a different energy for healing and transformation. As the Divine washes you with pink, you find yourself grounded in the history of the Buddha—the one who cares for all, including you. The passionate flame of red now empowers you, helping you accept unconditional love. Next, the brightness of white surrounds you, purifying and cleansing, while a beautiful shade of blue comforts and soothes you, actualizing your common sense and logical nature. The mystical blush of purple next sweetens your psychic powers, after which the sacred power of gold completes the maturation of this once-stuck worldly self, leaving you in childlike wonder.

Pull up the resulting wisdom from your roots until it reaches your heart. Here, connect with your "closed lotus" self, the one who might perceive the light but is too scared or ashamed to allow it in. Accept the various reasons you've been too frightened to merrily drink in the good things of spirit, and when you are ready, allow the Divine to breathe each of the six basic lotus colors into your heart, one at a time, encouraging loving transformation. As you proceed through pink, red, white, blue, purple, and, finally, gold, feel yourself growing in joy and creativity with each new color.

Your now-transformed undeveloped and closed selves rise with your breath into the crown of your head. Here awaits your fully actualized

and enlightened self, the lotus self in communion with the Divine. The Divine gleefully encircles this enlightened self with each of the lotus colors, moving from pink to red to white to blue, then onward to purple and, finally, gold. Every color deepens your illuminated state, embodying it within every aspect of you. You know yourself in every way as the thousand-petaled gold lotus, a representative of godly and good power.

Breathe deeply and remain in this state of truth for as long as you desire. Knowing yourself as united within but also linked with all things spiritual in this and other worlds, take a closing breath and begin your life anew.

You can end this meditation by chanting a Buddhist mantra about the lotus that means "hail, the jewel in the lotus": *om mani padme hum.*

Essential Oils

Essential oils have become an important part of the modern chakra medicine kit, although they have been used for thousands of years around the world for healing, cleansing, ritual, beautification, emotional clearing, and to enhance spiritual awareness. They can be diffused, breathed in (as is done with aromatherapy), applied topically, or included in massage. The one limitation is that you should never take oil internally without professional advice.

Essential oils are vibrational medicine. Each individual oil vibrates at a frequency that interacts with us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. They are ideal tools for chakra medicine because each essence administers to at least one chakra, vibrating it into health. The "Chakra Flower Essences, Gemstones, and Oils" section at the end of this chapter lists a few of the essential oils that match the different chakras. Professional opinions vary about the effects of these oils; because of this, I recommend you do further research to discover what the oils accomplish.

How can you use essential oils? Here are several ideas:

- Add a couple of drops to a base such as jojoba or a nourishing vegetable oil and use on the chakra site or as a lotion.
- Add to a spray bottle and use as a freshener.
- Place a drop into the hot wax of a burning candle.
- Add a few drops to potpourri.
- Add a few drops to a pot of steaming water.
- Dot a few cotton balls with an essential oil and tuck them into corners of your house or in your cupboards.
- Put a few drops on decorative padded clothes hangers.

Chakra Stone Therapy

Stones have been used therapeutically for centuries in systems including Traditional Chinese Medicine, ayurveda, and those created by shamanic traditions around the world.

Stone therapy is often called gemstone therapy or crystal healing, which can lead us to believe that the only therapeutic stones are gems. Yet the truth is that nearly any member of the stone community has the potential to be used in vibrational medicine, depending on need and application.

As we will explore in chapter 33, many people believe that the earth is alive, or at least imbued with life force. A stone is therefore an extension of the earth and carries the vibration of its part of the planet. Each stone group also has a unique chemical composition, and most gemstones, in particular, are organized in crystalline molecular structures.

Crystalline structures are ideal for storing and conveying information. Dr. Marcel Vogel, a particularly famous researcher who was once a scientist for IBM, showed that quartz crystals could store thoughts in much the same way as can magnetic tape. Nikola Tesla, another famous scientist of the twentieth century, revealed that crystals are similar to living beings. They can affect light, vibrate, convey electricity, and form under pressure. More recently, Dr. Norman Shealy, who has worked to support medical intuition, has shown that the use of crystals produces therapeutic effects. For instance, he found that

crystal therapy assisted 70 percent of depressed patients in recovering from depression, with no other treatment.[45]

The Hindu link between stones and subtle energy dates all the way back to the *Rig Veda*, which advises the use of seven gems to capture the sun's rays. Yet another early theory was that gems act as cosmic filters, screening out negative forces.[46] In the *Puranas*, gems were correlated to areas of the body and the nine planets of the solar system, thereby becoming fixtures in Vedic astrology (a system of East Indian origin). Later, gems became affiliated with ayurveda and were assigned medical properties and administered in the forms of pastes or powders. Eventually gems were granted alchemical powers and considered to be astrological transmitters. They were used as decorative objects for absorbing negative energy and producing positive energy, and were placed in the environment to produce energetic effects. Stones have also been seen as storage units for divine energy and are used in worship, arrayed on figures of deities and in amulets and mandalas, and transformed into lingams and yantras.[47]

EXERCISE: **Using Gemstones for Chakra Healing**

You can apply many of the Hindu stories to contemporary healing. For instance, in the Garuda Purana, a demon king named Bali offered his body for sacrifice. As parts of his body fell to earth, they transformed into nine gems, which also link us to different planets. You can use the following "Bali's Body of Stones" chart to link the planets, each representing a chakra, with healing the body parts. And you can use the gemstones featured in the following "Chakra Flower Essences, Gemstones, and Oils" chart in these ways:

- Determine which chakra may be out of balance using the techniques in chapter 12.
- Select a gemstone to focus on. You can use the information about Bali's body that follows or the information mentioned in the gemstone chart immediately following that, as well as any other

number of sources. You can also pick a stone based on the planet it is linked with.

- Clear the stone. This action involves releasing toxins and other programs from it so you can use it for your own purposes. You can clear a stone by mixing a tablespoon of Epsom salts or sea salt with a cup of cold water in a glass or ceramic cup. Soak the stone overnight. You can also bury a stone in a glass or ceramic container filled with dry salt overnight, points facing downward if the stone has any of these. As well, moonlight is a powerful cleansing agent; simply place your stones outside overnight.[48] Yet another way to discharge negative energy from a stone is to pray over it, asking the Divine to wash it clean, or you can smudge it clean with burning sage or lemongrass.
- Charge the stone. The goal of this step is to program the stone for your healing purposes. Typically, this is done through physical contact. You can simply hold the stone, wear it, or pray over it, asking that your own spirit, one of your chakras, or the Divine prepare it for you.
- Employ the stone in a number of ways. You can simply hold it while meditating, using a mantra, performing pranayama, or living your life. It can appear on an altar or a special site in your environment. You can also perform a chakra layout, in which a friend or professional asks you to lie down and surrounds you with various gemstones, placing them on or around you. Select stones that match the chakras they are near. You can also hold stones while performing healing, even using them as an instrument—like an extension of your finger—or wearing them as amulets or jewelry. The other technique is to create a gemstone essence. Taking a clean stone, drop it in a glass or ceramic bowl or bottle filled with spring water. Set this mix in the sun or moon; you can set a yantra, symbol, or written affirmation underneath it if you want. The substance, as

long as it is safe and sanitary, can then be drunk for its vibrational effect or dropped on the corresponding chakra.

- Use with chakra oils. Drop chakra-related essential oils on the stone to enhance its effects.
- Store special stones in a special space such as a basket containing soft, clean fabric or sage.

Bali's Body of Stones

Gem	Part of Bali's Body/ Body Areas Cured	Planet
Diamond	Bones	Venus
Pearl	Teeth	Moon
Ruby	Blood	Sun
Emerald	Bile	Mercury
Blue Sapphire	Eyes	Saturn
Cat's-eye	Sound (vocal issues)	Ketu
Yellow and White Sapphires	Skin	Jupiter (yellow sapphire)
Tourmaline	Nails	
Hessonite	Semen	Rahu
Lapis lazuli	Radiance (jaundice and sight)	
Quartz	Fats (tuberculosis, spleen problems)	
Agate	Remainder of body (gives luster to rest of body)[49]	

Most of the planets listed in "Bali's Body of Stones" are related to Vedic astrology meanings. Vedic depictions of planetary assignments to chakras can be different from those in Western astrology and those presented in part 2. Ketu and Rahu are moon nodes used in Vedic astrology.

Planet	Meaning	Chakra
Venus	Love and beauty	Fourth
Moon	Feminine energy	Sixth
Sun	Masculine energy	Sixth

Mercury	Communication	Fifth
Saturn	Primal energy	First
Ketu (South Node)	Shows us blocks to our karma	Seventh
Jupiter	Wealth and success	Second
Rahu (North Node)	Shows us how to work through our karma [50]	First

Chakra Flower Essences, Gemstones, and Oils

Flower essences, gemstones, and oils have been used for chakra medicine for centuries. The following chart is a compilation from a variety of sources that recommend different versions of these vibrational elements.[51]

Note: In this chart, BF stands for Bach Flower Essences, while AB indicates Australian Bush Flower Essences.

Chakra	Flower Essences	Gemstones	Essential Oils
First	*Clematis:* Daydreaming (BF) *Macrocarpa:* Adrenals (AB) *Red Lily:* Grounding (AB) *Star of Bethlehem:* Flow between body and soul (BF)	*Hematite:* Protection and healing *Garnet:* Success *Pyrite:* Solidifies identity *Ruby:* Resolves survival issues *Rhodochrosite:* Releases bodily pain *Smoky Quartz:* Transmutes negativity	Angelica Root Cedarwood Frankincense Myrrh Patchouli
Second	*Billy Goat Plum:* Releases shame (AB) *Mimulus:* Emotional fear (BF) *Rock Rose:* Extreme panic (BF) *She Oak:* Hormone balancing (AB)	*Bloodstone:* Transmutes; clears emotional negativity *Carnelian:* Inner security *Orange Calcite:* Energizes and cleanses *Tiger's Eye:* To respond, not react	Bergamot Cardamom Clary Sage Neroli Orange Patchouli Ylang-Ylang
Third	*Cerato:* Trusting self-judgment (BF) *Crowea:* Releases worry (AB) *Larch:* Improves confidence (BF) *Old Man Banksia:* Counteracts weariness (AB)	*Citrine:* Luck and success *Gold:* Harmony *Golden or Honey Calcite:* Personal power *Yellow Jasper:* Releases digestive toxins	Black Pepper Cinnamon Cypress Grapefruit Lemongrass Sandalwood
Fourth	*Agrimony:* Mental torture (BF)		Geranium

	Flannel Flower: Intimacy (AB) *Holly:* Blocked love (BF) *Gorse:* Despair (BF) *Walnut:* Protection from change (BF)	*Chrysocolla:* Unresolved grief; shut-down heart *Emerald:* Unblocks fear; lucky for love *Jade:* Attracts love and money *Malachite:* Reflects truth of the soul *Rose Quartz:* Anchors love *Watermelon Tourmaline:* Resolves imbalances and attracts love	Jasmine Lavender Rose Tangerine
Fifth	*Cognis Essence:* Clarity to speak truth (AB) *Paw Paw:* Assimilating new data (AB) *Mustard:* Helps us face problems (BF) *Olive:* Exhaustion (BF) *Wild Rose:* Apathy (BF)	*Azurite:* Helps speech *Blue Calcite:* Psychic activity *Lapis Lazuli:* Communication *Rutilated Quartz:* Clarity *Sodalite:* Inner peace *Turquoise:* Brings through wisdom	Basil Chamomile Peppermint Spearmint
Sixth	*Beech:* Intolerance (BF) *Chicory:* Selfish love (BF) *Isopogon:* Memory (AB) *Vervain:* Overenthusiasm (BF) *Vine:* Inflexibility (BF)	*Adventurine:* Clears fear of unknown *Azurite:* Opens third eye *Moldavite:* Opens potential *Sugilite (also seventh chakra):* Opens to spiritual support	Angelica Root Bay Laurel Elemi Juniper Rosemary Vetiver
Seventh	*Heather:* Self-centeredness (BF) *Impatiens:* Impatience (BF) *Sundew:* For decisiveness (AB) *Water Violet:* Pride (BF)	*Amethyst:* Guards against darkness; opens dreams; heals insomnia *Diamond:* Innocence and constancy *Kunzite:* Integrating spiritual into everyday *White Calcite:* Cleansing and healing *White Topaz:* Promotes spiritual truth	Cedarwood Frankincense Gurjum Rosewood Spikenard

Feeding Your Spirit with Food

Food provides spiritual nourishment, not just physical nutrients. Various practitioners from different cultures and yoga traditions have assigned certain

foods and spices to certain chakras, recommending that you feed a needy chakra its favorite ingredients to strengthen and enliven it. Following is a list of some of the most common chakra-based foods and spices. You can select a chakra you want to bolster and eat those foods; use your intuition to choose from this list. In order to keep your strongest chakra vibrant, you can emphasize the foods that represent it.

First Chakra Foods: Root vegetables, proteins including meat and tofu, soy products, peanuts, red fruits, cayenne, and pepper

Second Chakra Foods: Tropical fruits including mango and coconut, orange fruits and vegetables, honey, almonds, vanilla, carob, wheat, high-glycemic carbohydrates, and sesame seeds

Third Chakra Foods: Certain whole grains and high-fiber foods (such as corn, rice, and flax seed), yogurt, yellow and tan foods, ginger, turmeric, and fennel

Fourth Chakra Foods: Green leafy vegetables, air vegetables such as broccoli, green teas, sage, thyme, and parsley

Fifth Chakra Foods: Sea plants; liquids; high water content fruits like lemons, limes, and grapefruit; tree-growing fruits such as pears; salt; lemongrass

Sixth Chakra Foods: Red grapes, blackberries, chocolate, lavender, and poppy seed

Seventh Chakra Foods: Pure food of any kind, as well as fasting and detoxing and taking nourishment from the sun. Also the use of incense and smudging herbs, which are not taken internally.[52]

In my own work, I frequently help clients afflicted with food allergies by working with chakra medicine techniques. My understanding of the energetics of allergies is that the substances often represent psychological or spiritual triggers that have turned into an addiction or an overwhelming craving. As an example from my own life, when I was growing up, my

mother often ignored us—but not when she baked cookies. This motivated me to simultaneously desire and detest the ingredients in cookies.

In Norwegian homes, cookies are made with white flour and lots of butter. The part of me who craved the love of my mother started to relentlessly crave wheat (a form of gluten) and dairy products, setting up the fetters of addiction. On an energetic basis, gluten and dairy carried the frequencies I was missing in my life, and the part of me crying for a mother's love demanded these ingredients/frequencies. Also on an energetic basis, the part of me who was angry at my mother for substituting cookies for love rejected the gluten and dairy and reacted to it by developing antibodies that literally created an immune intolerance to the substances—the very definition of an allergy.

I was able to clear the most challenging of these allergies/addictions by using chakra medicine techniques. First I figured out which chakras related to the different substances: dairy relates to the first chakra and gluten to the second. Next I used the information in my twelve-chakra system on child development, which can be found in chapter 3, to figure out that I developed the first chakra dairy issue in utero to the first six months of life and the gluten reaction during the ages of six months to two and a half years. I then used regression techniques, chakra clearing, and chakra balancing techniques, such as those you've been taught in Part 3, to own and then release my emotional reactions, adopt healthy beliefs, and connect to Spirit instead of my mother.

My own crib sheet for chakras and the most frequent corresponding allergies, according to my counseling experience, is as follows:

Chakra	Strongest Allergens
First	Dairy, meat, and highly addictive strong substances such as high-proof alcohol. (I place potatoes, yams, and other earth-grown foods in the tenth chakra, which relates to issues with our ancestors.)
Second	Wheat and other gluten grains such as barley and oats; oranges and other citrus foods
Third	Corn, squashes, beer, and nightshades such as eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes

Fourth	Chocolate, wine, and green vegetables
Fifth	Can be any food that you have eaten while subjected to verbal abuse, such as being yelled at during dinner
Sixth	Vision-inducing substances including wine, chocolate, and cocoa
Seventh	Fish and “clean” alcohol such as vodka

You have now become familiar with a wide variety of chakra medicine practices. While some are highly esoteric and the instructions are precise—the province of dedicated yogis—others are more intuitive and accessible to anyone. And all of them can be folded into your self-care, as they have stood the test of time, whether in the West or the East.

It’s important to make these exercises your own, selecting between them and adapting those you are most attracted to. We are each unique and individual; frankly, our chakras are as well. Your first chakra might be red, as is your neighbor’s, but there are infinite shades of red. A little purple in the mix and I’d call you a visionary, someone who approaches their basic needs strategically. Is there a twist of lemon-yellow in your muladhara? You’ll most likely have outlined all of your primary life goals and created a plan for how to achieve them. And if your first chakra might be vibrationally perceived as white rather than red, well, you’re one of those amazing bright lights, no matter what activities you undertake.

The point I’m making isn’t about what specific color your chakras might be. Rather, it’s that you are a spiritual being; upon entering this world, you customized your energetic body with your own divine imprint. Because of this, I encourage you to approach whichever practices you find most appealing. You may never choose to engage in the ancient practice of ujjiyi breath, for example, favoring more intuitive, less structured work. But then again, once you start down this path, it may be exactly the tried and true practices of the ages that beckon you forward.

As we leave part 3, we can stop and take stock of what we’ve learned throughout section 1. We now have a basic knowledge of chakras as energy organs that promise gain in all areas of our lives. We have met the chakra-

activation energy of kundalini and all seven Hindu chakras in their wondrous complexity. And we've acquired chakra medicine tools we can use for acute and chronic concerns or simply to relax and open to inspiration. With both feet now firmly on the chakra path, it is now time to take an even deeper dive, which section 2 affords us.

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SECTION 2

Chakras in Depth

Historical, Scientific, and Cross-Cultural Understandings

Isn't each star different yet working toward the same end?

Marcus Aurelius

As we move into section 2, let's recap what we've already learned.

Set within each of us are points of light as bright as the stars above. These pulsing swirls of physical and subtle energy are the "stars" in an ever-unfolding evolution of self, humanity, and, in fact, the universe. Adjoined with other players in the energetic anatomy, the chakras are key to health, connection, and spiritual enlightenment.

So far we've explored the phenomena and importance of chakras as related to Hindu theories, the existence of kundalini life energy, and practical matters such as healing and manifestations. We've barely scratched the surface. Now it's time to prepare for the deep dive.

We'll begin with part 4 and a review of chakra knowledge through the lens of ancient India. This cradle of chakra medicine has instructed cultures around the world in chakra medicine and continues to do so today. Is India the origin of chakras? Asking that question is like wondering when life really began on this planet. We know, however, that this region of the world has

been birthing and shaping chakra ideology for close to twelve thousand years; for that we must bow to its graceful coaching.

Then we make an almost complete reversal and examine chakra medicine concepts from a completely different point of view—sort of. What do chakras and their friends subtle and physical energies, the body, energetic anatomies, and kundalini have in common? The correct response is "science."

Chakras and their companions are products of observation, intuitive knowing, spiritual truths, and sagas and stories, but they are also explainable through scientific perspectives. Part 5 features the science of chakraology from dozens of points of view. In the end, you'll rediscover what the ancients already knew. Science and spirituality occupy the same continuum: different ways to explain Truth.

Parts 6 though 9 are, in many ways, the core of this book. These parts compose the gemstone in the center of a ring, the star imbedded within a setting made from the gold of spirituality and the silver of science. Here you will find one chakra system after another, products of a search around the world and across time. Like facets of a diamond, each system reflects the culture it developed within as well as cross-cultural influences.

Because a multiplicity of communities created most of the world's chakra systems, I have organized this exploration in loose "country" or continental groups. In part 6 we meet the ancient chakra systems of Asia. In part 7 we excavate early Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. Part 8 features modern Western chakra systems, and part 9 concludes the book with overviews of natural chakra systems and beliefs as well as descriptions of new, emerging, and unusual chakras.

By the time you complete section 2, you could consider yourself a true chakra expert. Then again, the nature of chakra knowledge is that the pursuit of it will never end. It began at the beginning of time and will only end when the door to time closes. After all, Truth is forever creating itself.

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Part 4

The History of Chakra Knowledge Through the Lens of Ancient India

> There are dead stars that still shine because their light is trapped in time.
>
> Don DeLillo

The most oft-told detail about the history of the chakras is that they were first mentioned in the earliest Vedic sacred scriptures. So as we leave our foundational explorations of the chakras in section 1 and commence the more in-depth investigations that compose the rest of the book, the Vedas offer an excellent place to start. We will delve into some of the mysteries associated with their creation and touch on the language in which they were first written about. In this way we can develop an appreciation of the fact that some of today's key insights into chakras began their formulation millennia ago. We owe a great deal to the early explorers of the subtle body and what their Vedic writings teach us.

Dating back at least three thousand years, the Vedas constitute the oldest layer of the sacred Sanskrit literature of India and are the most revered texts of Hinduism. They primarily consist of four main bodies of scripture called the *Samhrita*, but over time texts were added to these four, and hundreds of others have branched from them. Thus "Vedic texts" or "Veda scriptures" includes writings composed in Vedic Sanskrit during the Iron Age, from 1200 to 200 BCE, as well as their corollaries, many of which were written hundreds of years after the original four texts. These scriptures have been

said to contain knowledge that is upward of twelve thousand years old. In pursuing the origins of chakra knowledge, we are dealing with very ancient material indeed.

Our contemporary chakra knowledge is often divided between three loosely organized bodies of knowledge: Vedic, tantric, and yogic, and we will investigate all three in this part. The Vedic tradition is sometimes called "orthodox" and is based on writings in the primary Vedic scriptures. The tantric tradition is highly shamanic. It might incorporate Vedic scripture and often does; however, various tantric sects also meld Asian, Buddhist, or other cultural beliefs into Vedic understandings. Some tantric sects are so disparate from the Vedic baseline that they constitute their own doctrine.

Yoga, a term originating in ancient writings, is much more than the set of healthful physical practices you may be familiar with. It is a complete approach to a meaningful life, and the ideals of yoga have become inseparable from chakra knowledge.

Both Vedic and non-Hindu tantric texts form the basis of much of our chakra knowledge, including principles of yoga and many of the concepts you were introduced to in section 1 such as nadis, granthi, koshas, and kundalini. In general, the chapters in part 4 will add other key ingredients to the chakra storyline, helping you build a truly all-inclusive sense of the world of the chakras.

In the end it will become clear that chakra knowledge was forged in bursts of insight by actors whose brilliant discoveries we must thread together like pearls on a string in order to establish continuity. Let's begin now by time traveling to ancient days and getting acquainted with the most venerable scriptures from which chakra knowledge originated, reviewing some of their most relevant contents.

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Ancient Vedic Scripture

THE FOUR CANONS

> CIVILIZATION IS A movement and not a condition, a voyage and not a harbor.
>
> ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

Because they form the skeleton upon which chakra knowledge has been built, I have devoted this entire chapter to discussing the four main canons of the Vedas, especially the primary scripture, the *Rig Veda*. I'll present an overview of these writings—what they are and how they are organized—and invite you into a discussion about the dating of the oldest of these manuscripts, a question that has plagued and fascinated scholars worldwide for hundreds of years.

Wrapped up in the placement of these important writings on a calendar is another key question: authorship. We cannot understand a text without comprehending the people who originated it. Any complex system of thoughts, including chakraology, is more than a collection or configuration of ideas. The study of chakras is a vast discipline that incorporates belief systems and philosophies about life, death, and the nature of being human. It is an assemblage of knowledge, wisdom, and events that must be pulled from history like a thread from a tapestry. So first we must ask: who were the people who lassoed the stars of spirituality and enfolded them in the scripture we now call the Vedas?

Some scholars believe the Vedas' creators were indigenous to the East Indian region. Others testify that the poets who wrote these scriptures came from elsewhere, bringing their oral traditions with them. This chapter will sketch both sides of this disagreement and leave it to you to make your own

decision, and move into a discussion of the earliest mentions of the chakras in the most primary sections of the four main Vedas.

One thing is certain: no matter who the true originators of Vedic doctrine were, the hearts of these people lie within the scriptures themselves. That is why this chapter highlights some of the most important points of Vedic thought, seeking not only to understand who the story makers were but what they were striving to become. With the "when" and "who" of the Vedas considered, we will then cast our net a bit wider. While profound knowledge was brewing in the caldron of India, spiritual ideas, laws, and concepts were also percolating in other parts of the world. We'll examine a few of those that coincided with emerging Vedic ideas and ideals.

A final section about Hindu cosmology, as well as an introduction to the Hindu deities, will round out our initial introduction to Hindu philosophy.

Everything this chapter covers is foundational to understanding the milieu that bubbles beneath our complex understandings of the chakras and related systems—not just from a Hindu perspective but from that of other cultures as well.

This chapter's journey is extensive in that it spans thousands of years. The conceptualization of the chakras took every one of these years to develop, and it continues to do so today.

The East Indian Backdrop: The Four Main Vedic Scriptures

Hindu-based chakra teachings originated in the Indus Valley, an inhabited floodplain around the Indus River. This area is now located in part of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northwestern India and is currently known as the Punjab region. It is from here that Hinduism involved, but not through a single, universal set of beliefs. Thousands of Hindu sects arose, as evidenced by a chaotic array of writings dating back at least three thousand years. The ideas the people of this region captured could have been transplanted from people living far from the Indus Valley—in fact, as far as the steppes of Russia.

As I mentioned earlier, four of the Vedas are unarguably the most significant, containing the germ of Hindu philosophy, cosmology, and practices and serving as the soil that nurtured much of our current best-known chakra system and related ideas. All four were written in Sanskrit, the oldest known written language in the world.[1]

The word *veda* is based on the Sanskrit *ved* or *vid* and means "knowledge" or "revelation," a fitting description for this collection of wisdom writings. The four scriptures are the *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*. (Some sources link a fifth scripture, the *Mahabharatha* or *Panchama Veda*, with these other canons.[2]) They address the following main topics:

***Rig Veda*—**"royal knowledge"

***Sama Veda*—**"knowledge of chants"

***Yajur Veda*—**"knowledge of ritual"

***Atharva Veda*—**"knowledge of incarnations"[3]

All Hindu scripture can be categorized as *shruti*, "that which is revealed," or *smriti*, "that which is remembered." If it is considered pure revelation, then the writings are not human inventions; instead, they are holy and said to have originated at the beginning of creation. This divine knowledge could be perceived and explained by seers called *rishis*.

The four main Vedas are all considered shruti—direct transmission from Source. Within each are four major segments:

- The Samhita or mantra portion, a collection of hymns and prose mantras to be used in Vedic rituals. *Samhita* means "compilation of knowledge" and "collection of mantras." The word *mantra* itself means "metered text" or "hymn." The Samhita section usually appears at the beginning of the scripture, and the mantras typically concern nature and deities. (To make matters more interesting, there are also other books called Samhitas that are post-Vedic—but we will leave that aside for simplicity's sake.)

- The Brahmanas section of each of the four primary Vedas explains the mantras, as well as the rituals and procedures involved in working with them. Each Veda has several Brahmanas attached to it. They can be considered separate texts or they can be partially integrated into the text of the Samhitas. They can also include the Upanishads and the Aranyakas, the next two categories of writings.
- The Upanishads are philosophical and metaphysical writings about gods, humans, and the relationship between the soul (atman) and Brahman (the Absolute). These are often collectively referred to as the Vedanta, or endings of the Vedas. Along with the Aranyakas, they form the concluding pieces of the Brahmanas. We will briefly explore the Upanishads later in this chapter, as well as in more depth in chapter 17.
- The Aranyakas, or "forest texts," offer objects of meditation for those living in the forests and deal with mysticism, philosophy, and symbolism.[4]

The remembered texts, the smriti—which are adjuncts to the four main texts—tend to be those that bring out the meaning of the shruti (revealed) writings, often by providing explanations about moral conduct and offering instruction for rituals. Texts such as the Dharma Sutras and the *Puranas* are usually considered smriti, as are many minor scriptures. (There are arguments about this, however; some experts believe the *Puranas*, for instance, constitute a sort of fifth Vedic scripture.) The Dharma Sutras are several manuals that form the earliest basis of Hindu laws. Sutras are "threads" or "strings" of rules, especially dealing with human relations. *Puranas* are post-Vedic writings that mainly form a narrative of the history of the universe, as well as genealogies of kings and heroes. They also describe Hindu cosmology and geography and are organized into three categories, each named after a main god: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.

And so it is that the original mystical revealed teachings have been illuminated and expanded over time.[5] Still another text that factors into our

discussion of chakras, sometimes considered revealed and sometimes remembered, is the Bhagavad Gita, a "song of God" composed about 200 BCE and included in the Sanskrit epic the Mahabharata. It features a discussion between the god Krishna and the Indian hero Arjuna about the purpose of life.[6]

If you have been walking the chakra path for a while, you've probably heard mention of many of these texts. If you are new to all of this information and choose to explore, you may discover that some of these Vedic writings are among the most beautiful in the world, inclusive of the songs of the gods and of the human heart.

Dating the Vedic Canons

One of the major debates among Vedic scholars is where to place the four main texts on a timeline. Various scholarly suggestions place the writing of them, or at least the sharing of the information they contain, between 12,000 BCE and 1000 BCE, a boggling span of eleven thousand years.[7]

What scholars can agree on is that the *Rig Veda* is the oldest compilation of wisdom in the world and therefore the eldest among the four Vedic scriptures. It is also the origin of much of Hindu culture, as many other Hindu sacred texts can trace their roots to this revealed word.

For perspective, the Abrahamic religions arguably arose much later.[8] However, it is interesting to note that Hindu and Abrahamic writings share common concepts and perhaps similar seeds. Some scholars also connect the Vedas to ancient Egypt and other cultures.

There are many good reasons why it is so hard to pinpoint the exact birth of the *Rig Veda*. The primary one is that our ancestors flawlessly passed wisdom down through oral tradition, sometimes for thousands of years, before capturing it in writing. How can we ever know how old this mystical knowledge was before anyone preserved it in physical form? Legend says that it was first received by seven ancient rishis known as the *saptarishis*. Each of their students spent twelve years memorizing the scripture until they

could remember every word perfectly.[9] Because of this practice, it's virtually impossible to figure out a "start date" for Vedic knowledge.

A second reason we can't know the exact timing of these scriptures is that we're not clear about their authorship, especially of the *Rig Veda*. As we shall explore in the next section of this chapter, we have two basic choices:

1. The Hindu scripture that eventually emerged in the Indus Valley was carried in by an invading race called the Aryans, although it was also influenced by the indigenous culture called the Harappans. If this is true, the information in Vedic scripture is most likely much older than the rough date of 1500 BCE offered by many scholars.[10]
2. The majority of the works are native to the region, which would imply authorship between 2000 and 1200 BCE.

Much of the linguistic evidence suggests that the *Rig Veda* was composed in the northwestern part of the Indian region between 1700 and 1100 BCE.[11] Yet other scholarly assessments relate it to earlier cultures, insisting it emerged between 2200 and 1600 BCE.[12] One more vote is that the *Rig Veda* was most likely conceived in 1500 BCE, codified in 600 BCE, and written down around 300 BCE.[13]

A similar confusion clouds the dating of the other three main Vedic texts. The most commonly accepted chronology is that the *Yajur* and *Sama Vedas* were composed between 1400 and 1100 BCE, and the *Atharva Veda* between 1100 and 900 BCE. We also know that not everything we can read in these scriptures now was complete by those dates. For instance, the *Yajur Veda* references fully developed caste systems and advances in art that didn't even exist in the early first millennium.[14] This means that at least this book—if not all four—was expanded after it captured the original revelations of the seers.

The question of timing aside, the most vital of these early texts is the *Rig Veda* (the name also appears as *Rigveda*, *Rgveda*, and *Rig-Veda*). The source of much material in the other three scriptures, *Rig Veda* is the mothership, a complex collection distributed over a series of ten books and eleven supplemental hymns.[15] Also known as the "Veda of Verses," *Rig Veda* is

composed of 1,028 hymns addressing various deities and arranged to serve the needs of the priestly families who were the custodians of this material.[16] These poems are grouped into ten circles called *mandalas*, a term that has survived into contemporary literature and yogic practices and means not only "circle" but "universe."[17]

The People Behind Vedic Scripture: Who Was There "In the Beginning"?

Many anthropologists have tracked the gods and their related chants featured in the *Rig Veda* to the steppes of Russia and a people called the Aryans. According to many scholars, Aryan concepts were cultivated between 4500 and 1500 BCE in central Russia and were carried into the Indus Valley around 2000 BCE.[18]

The native people of the Indus Valley were the Harappan civilization, whose kingdom had once spread widely through this valley. A highly accomplished people, they dwelled in two great cities but also peopled hundreds of smaller villages. Their civilization peaked between 2300 and 2000 BCE. Their two main cities, Mahenjo-Daro and Harappa, were about two hundred fifty miles apart. These people left behind figures of mother goddesses, stone lingams, and a figure in a yoga pose, which hints at some of the yogic ideas that now incorporate the chakras.[19] We will further explore these yoga origins in chapter 17.

For centuries, the Aryans—their name meaning "honorable" or "nobled"—led a pastoral existence in southern Russia. These Indo-Europeans had lived on the steppes since 4500 BCE but had spread to Greece, Italy, Scandinavia, and Germany by 2500 BCE. They basically became two people: one that spoke Avestan and the other speaking an early form of Sanskrit. They lived peacefully until 1500 BCE, when each side adopted a different set of beliefs.

Before 1500 BCE both groups believed there was an invisible force, dwelling inside themselves and outside as well, that provided unity. This force was the Creator at the center of the universe. The Avestans were appalled when the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans embraced the god Indra, a warring dragon slayer

who rides a chariot to the clouds, with an emphasis on *agni,* or fire, the force that creates dynamism. For their part, the Avestans preferred Varuna, the god of order. When a master of peace, Zoroaster, attempted to restore accord between the two groups in 1200 BCE, the Aryans were having none of it. Warlike, they were already migrating south into Afghanistan, Punjab, and the Indus River Valley—called the Land of the Seven Rivers—bringing their beliefs with them.

Many historians, including Karen Armstrong, believe the ancient Vedic scriptures reflect Aryan culture while also absorbing remaining Harappan philosophies. Other historians argue that Vedic scripture must be Harappan, as there is no evidence of fighting between the Aryans and the local people. (Yet others might suggest an even earlier origin of beliefs, such as the ancient East Indians or the Dravidians.)

As Armstrong points out, the Harappan culture had almost disappeared; fighting wasn't necessary—merely a transplanting of culture was required. Besides, she adds, Vedic scripture contains a lot of evidence pointing to Aryan roots. The Aryans opted for *yoga,* or the "yoking" of their horses to chariots, for example, when they began a raid. We shall learn that one definition of the word *chakras* relates to these chariots in "The *Rig Veda* and the Chakras: The First Appearance" section later in this chapter.

The Vedic texts also uphold many of the attributes of Varuna, the Avestans' god of order, such as the administration of law, guardianship of truth, and punishment of falsehood, but these are credited to Indra. Most likely, says Armstrong, the learned elite compiled the earliest hymns of the *Rig Veda* early in their inhabitance of India.

However, many of the poems contained in the sacred texts could go back even further in time and may have been the property of the seven priestly families who settled in India, each owners of their own private collections. These stories were learned by heart and were not committed to writing until much later.[20]

Even among those who believe the Aryans carried into the valley most of the information that ended up in the *Rig Veda*, there is agreement that the

local spirituality was also absorbed into this scripture. This means that Hinduism is an amalgam of various cultural sources. As the Aryans moved east and west, local divinities became associated with their deities. For instance, the local Indian goddesses became the wives of the Aryan gods Shiva and Vishnu.[21]

Other historians reject the notion that the source of Vedic scriptural knowledge is Aryan. One researcher, N. S. Rajaram, has followed the lead of several other scholars to analyze the mathematics involved in ancient Indian texts called the Sulbasutras. He concludes that ancient Egyptians and Babylonians derived their mathematics from ancient Indian texts of the late Vedic period. This knowledge would have been wiped out by Aryans during an invasion, and since that did not happen, Rajaram discounts the Aryans as the authors of the Vedas.

Rajaram also uses geographical research to show that the *Rig Veda* must have been written long before the Aryan invasion. As he and others have pointed out, contemporary Indians consider the Ganges the most sacred of rivers, but this wasn't the case in ancient times. The holy water then was the Sarasvati, a huge river that ran somewhat parallel to and east of the Indus River.

Modernity labeled the Sarasvati a "mythical" river. However, satellite data has shown that such a river did, in fact, flow in India—exactly in the same way and places as described in the *Rig Veda*. The late explorer V. S. Wakankar traced the course of this ancient river and, along with others, showed that it had dried up by 1900 BCE, if not earlier. This means that the people who composed the Vedas were already in India before the Aryan invasion of 1500 BCE.

One more important voice in the "great debate" about the origin of the early Vedic scripture is David Frawley, who often works with fellow scholar and student of mysticism Georg Feuerstein. Frawley has directly examined Vedic literature, wondering if nomadic pastoral invaders could have written the texts. If so, they should have no knowledge of the ocean. Frawley found no mention of an invasion and also discovered that the voices in the *Rig Veda*

were not ignorant of the ocean; rather, they evoke images of oceans, ships, and navigation devices.[22]

Frawley offers an alternative view of the Indus Valley being continually occupied by its early people, who believed themselves to be Aryan. Besides pointing to the mention of the Sarasvati River, Frawley supports his view with archeological evidence and astronomical lore implying that the Vedic people were already in the region of India before 2400 BCE. There are over a hundred references to the ocean in these old writings, and a recent French excavation in the area showed that all ancestors of the Indus Valley culture could be found within this region dating back to at least, if not before, 6000 BCE. In other words, Vedic scholars usually assume an Aryan invasion, whereas Frawley and other scholars assert that the people who wrote the main Vedic scriptures had already lived in that region for thousands of years.

Why strive so mightily to determine who wrote these classic texts? Frawley believes it is important to discern their true authorship for several reasons. Primary is the fact that many of the anthropologists analyzing the time period were Christian and interpreted the region according to the timetable of creation laid out in the Bible. If peoples inhabited the Indus Valley before 6000 BCE, it could arguably be the oldest and most central of ancient cultures; the Vedic Scripture, rather than the Bible, could be the most authentic view of the ancient world. This would have been information Christian anthropologists simply could not believe.[23]

A Key Philosophy of the Vedic Scriptures: The Yugas

If Vedic philosophy is indeed the oldest in the world, or at least one of the oldest, it must still sing somewhere deep inside each of us, which makes it even more important to ask this question: What does the body of the four Vedic scriptures illustrate? This, perhaps, is the most essential question to ask for those of us interested in placing chakra knowledge and medicine within a philosophical context.

In order to answer this question, we must temporarily disengage our minds from our everyday concerns, which Westerners tend to qualify as either good

or bad. We must divorce ourselves of the need to seek authority elsewhere, such as in a religious or political leader, established doctrine, or family matriarch or patriarch.

We must then see ourselves as part of a long tradition, one that is thousands of years old, grounded in a culture so ancient that we do not question its existence or authenticity. We must actually perceive ourselves as part of a world that has been created many times in *yugas,* or ages, with this epoch, the Kali Yuga, being the fourth.

It would be essential to understand the nature of this yuga as well as those that preceded it. To do this is to understand that we have been de-evolving and that the chakra system, among other ideas, is in place to help us step back toward the heavens.

According to Hindu ideas, a yuga lasts between 4.1 and 8.2 billion years and comprises one life and death cycle of Brahman, the Creator. Each yuga encompasses only a very small amount of his time, as within the "causal ocean" there are innumerable Brahmans rising and disappearing like bubbles in the sea, all a part of the material universe and therefore constantly fluctuating. Within the physical universe even the Creator is a part of birth, aging, disease, and death, although Brahman is engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord and therefore is able to attain liberation from this cycling.[24]

We mortals have all existed within each of these great cycles, reincarnated over and over again. Unfortunately, our path has been one of decline, characterized by a loss of truth, wisdom, knowledge, life span, and emotional and intellectual intelligence. There is even a formula that measures the loss of righteousness throughout the ages. For instance, we lived in the fullness of truth in the first epoch, the Satya Yuga, but in each subsequent age lost one-quarter of our truth. As we are now in the Kali Yuga, we have only one-quarter truth left.[25]

We were all present during the first and greatest of epochs, the Satya Yuga, which was longer than the other yugas. This was the yuga of truth, or the golden age, characterized by virtue and religion and an absolute lack of vice.

A single life span was a hundred thousand years, and we attained self-realization through meditation.

This age passed and we entered the Treta Yuga, or silver age. We still lived a long time—ten thousand years—but self-realization also required great sacrifices, or *yajñas*. We lost goodness and our sense of high ideals, and our morals began to decline.

Next we passed into the Dvapara Yuga, or copper age. Living for one thousand years now, we achieved self-realization by worshipping in the temple. Our consciousness reduced even further and we began to concentrate on our own personal needs and comfort, no matter the effect on others. Finally we entered our current epoch, the Kali Yuga, or iron age. While we cumulatively started with one-fourth wisdom, this is shrinking to zero. We might live to a hundred years of age but must work hard to attain wisdom, such as by devotedly chanting the names of the Lord.

We have lost our spiritual awareness and identify only with our physical selves. In this "age of vice" all is strife, discord, and argument. Evil and dishonesty have replaced the virtues we experienced in the golden age. We have lost track of our "breath body," which many believe includes the spirit bodies such as the chakras, as well as our higher selves, and we identify only with our physical bodies and lower selves.[26] As was predicted in the Hindu text the Vishnu Purana, written between 800 and 300 BCE, the following is occurring:

> The minds of men will be wholly occupied in acquiring wealth; and wealth will be spent solely on selfish gratification…Corruption will be the universal means of subsistence.[27]

Is there hope?

It is said that in every epoch Lord Vishnu, the Vedic supreme god called the "preserver of the universe," is said to incarnate ten times as ten different avatars. Lord Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, is one of the avatars of this age.

According to Hindu philosophy, we also have for our salvation the Vedic scriptures, compiled by the rishis headed by Vyasedeva, the literary incarnation of Lord Krishna, at the beginning of the Kali Yuga, so that wisdom cannot be lost through these dark ages.

All of us can access the divine light reflected in Vedic scripture, according to long-held beliefs, for we all have a soul that can communicate with Atman, or the "ultimate." This means that understanding scripture and moving toward final emancipation or enlightenment are not dependent on having a teacher or following a religious leader. Rather, embracing the totality of scriptural wisdom is based on *darsan* (seeing), immediate perception, and knowing, rather than intellectual speculation.

Because of this, we must all walk our own talk. We can evolve by reincarnating, and, as Hindu philosophy insists, we have done this. But we cannot simply move into a "state of oneness" and assume higher consciousness. As the Vedic saying goes, "Even in a flock of birds, each bird has to fly for itself."[28]

And what is one of the most important methods we have for learning to fly? The chakras and their related systems.

The *Rig Veda* and the Chakras: The First Appearance

Whoever or whatever the exact source or sources of the *Rig Veda*, it is the first scripture that presents the word for chakra: the Sanskrit term *cakra*.[29] It actually appears many times in the *Rig Veda* in a variety of ways—none of them obviously spiritual. Rather, spiritual symbology ascribed to the chakras appears in another part of the Vedic scriptures, the Upanishads, which are outlined in chapter 17 (although expert David Frawley suggests otherwise through arguments I presented in this section).

One use of the word cakra (which I will state as "chakra" from this point forward unless directly quoting or referencing a text) is in relation to technical knowledge, most specifically to a cart with rims attached to "tyres" (outer parts of a wheel). The *Rig Veda* also describes a process for irrigation through an iron wheel called a cakra that draws water from wells.[30]

In addition, the *Rig Veda* references the word chakra as a symbol of dynamism, and it also uses it as a label for the wheel of a chariot. The latter is a favorite symbol of the Vedic sages, often ascribed to the dawn with such regularity that dawn itself is called a chakra. Creation is thought to move on its axis like a chakra, or wheel, so the word often appears as a symbol for this movement.[31]

The word chakra is also used in relationship to the god Vishnu, who inherently holds the three worlds of earth, space, and the atomic realm together. The chief characteristic of Vishnu is his dynamism. In the form of a chakra, or wheel, Vishnu rotates continually, uniting all three worlds. An example of Vishnu's energy is depicted in illustration 41, which showcases his special chakra symbol.[32]

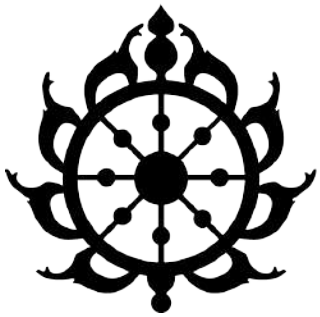


ILLUSTRATION 41—VISHNU AND THE SUDARSHANA CHAKRA: Vishnu holds a chakra, or spinning disk, in one of his four hands. In this context it is said to be a reminder of time as well as a weapon against blasphemy. It is the Sudarshana Chakra, which is not one of the main in-body Hindu chakras; rather, it is a weapon with 108 serrated edges. This disk is occasionally mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and the Puranas. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

It is the use of such symbols that prompts many researchers to assert that chakras were considered spiritual organs even in the *Rig Veda*. Frawley points to the common appearance of the symbolic number seven. As he relates, the *Rig Veda* frequently speaks of seven worlds, seven rivers, seven sages, seven wisdoms, seven pranas, and more, although it doesn't specifically mention seven chakras.[33] It does, however, say this:

> The seven Gods have seven spears and seven lights. They hold seven glories. (7.28.5)

Frawley links these and other recitations to the mention of meditation in a Vedic hymn by Ayasya Angirasa, one of the oldest and most famous of the seers. Angirasa states that the original nature of sacrifice involves meditation through the seven chakras of the subtle body and four states of consciousness (waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and being very conscious). Frawley also interprets other scriptures in the *Rig Veda* in relation to the symbolism of the sun, which he believes relates to the practice of yoga, and the use of seven chakras to open to a spiritual vision of the world.[34]

Chakras in the Atharva Veda

Another of the four Vedic scriptures that mentions the chakras is the *Atharva Veda*, which was written much later than other texts. Some place the writing at 200 BCE but suggest that it may have been composed about 1000 BCE.[35] According to these writings, the city of the god Ayodhya is represented bodily by eight "cakras" and nine gates, which consist of two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, a mouth, and the organs of reproduction and the anus. This city is lit by golden rays and serves as the abode of eternal peace. A yogi who follows the tenets laid forth, or "yog," can achieve this city and its eternity.[36]

Echoes of the Vedas in Other Parts of the World

Linguistic similarities between Vedic civilizations and other cultures are evident even today. For instance, Siberian nomads and the North American Lakota Sioux both use the term *garuda* to describe their thunderbird eagles.[37] In the Hindu realm the god Garuda is the king of the birds, who often acts as a messenger between the gods and humans.

Several archeologists have concluded that in ancient times, people from the region of India migrated to America and developed a great civilization. The author of *A Compact History of Mexico*, Ignacio Bernall, asserts that this Asian occupation of the Americas occurred thirty-five thousand years ago. Brazilian nuclear scientist Dr. Arcio Nuns and other researchers point to a group called the Dravidians of Asia, who left for the Americas about eleven thousand years ago.

These statements are substantiated by several findings. For instance, archaeologists have discovered deities in America resembling the Hindu gods Shiva, Ganesh, Kali the Sun, Buddha, and more. (We will learn more about the link between Vedic scripture and Buddhism in chapter 24.) The Aztec calendar contains concepts similar to those found in Vedic scripture, including the idea of the four yugas, a cataclysmic event, death and rebirth, and the concept of two planets causing solar eclipses. Similarities also exist between languages, all pointing back to the possibility of Sanskrit roots. Also related are similarities between the Hindu trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—and the Mexican trinity of Ho, Huitzilopochtli, and Tlaloc (all related to Quetzalcoatl, mentioned in chapter 2).[38]

Still more symbols that are important to the Vedas and Hinduism appear in other parts of the world. The sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi, Greece, as well as all similar holy temples, was formed around a stone called the *omphalus*, also termed "the center of the world." There are multiple similarities between this stone and several ancient Hindu concepts. In appearance, the stone looks like the Hindu Shiva lingam, with a conical shape upon which are depicted the tantric symbols describing polar energies, such as ascending and descending forces and male and female dualities. It is a representation of Shiva, one of the oldest worshipped gods mentioned in the Vedic scripture. Shiva can be seen as Rudra, who is featured in the *Rig Veda*.[39] The serpent found on the omphalus is comparable to kundalini in Hindu literature and can be seen in illustration 42.

ILLUSTRATION 42—THE GREEK OMPHALOS: The Greek omphalus is similar to the Indian Shiva linga, as both are round and feature a serpent similar to the Hindu kundalini serpent. ILLUSTRATION BY ELISABETH ALBA

Among the Greeks, the omphalus was linked to the navel and the connection between earth and humans. The Hindus believed their creator, the god Brahma, emerged from a lotus flower that emerged from the navel of the sleeping god Vishnu.[40]

The overall suggestion is that ancient India was the bed of civilization and that, for a time, it was as if the entirety of the world shared a similar viewpoint—a unified worldview that seems not to exist today unless it lies beneath our apparent cultural differences.

The Evolution of the Hindu Gods

It is impossible to acknowledge the full range of the symbolism contained in chakra lore without understanding the hand-in-glove relationship between the Hindu pantheon and the chakras. In section 1 you met the goddess Shakti and learned the story of her rise through the chakra bodies, a journey to her god-consort Shiva. Also in section 1, in the seven chapters dedicated to each of the seven main Hindu chakras, you learned which gods and goddesses relate to each chakra. Eventually Buddha and his many forms became linked to the chakras as well, and other cultures assign their own gods to the chakras.

There are so many Hindu gods and goddesses mentioned in the Vedas that it's easy to become muddled when they are referenced. Some appear in earlier texts and then reappear later, transformed into newer, upgraded versions of themselves. As well, when a particular god appears in one particular form—and is called by one of his names—the form and name of his consort might change. Yet despite the shifting terrain of ancient chakra lore—which you will have learned by now is the rule, not the exception—I think it's important to glimpse this divine aspect of our understanding of the chakras. Following, then, I have outlined a few of the deities as they appear in different eras so you may follow their mighty treks across time.

Early Vedic Deities

Early worshippers believed in one supreme god, Brahma, and saw the forces of nature as the manifestation of this god. All other Vedic gods can be

classified into three categories: terrestrial, atmospheric, and celestial. I have selected the gods that appear elsewhere in this book, with the first three considered the most important during the earliest of ages.

Indra (Male): Also called Vayu, Indra is a warlord and the most important deity of earliest times. He rules the air.

Agni (Male): An intermediary between gods and man, whose place is on the earth.

Surya (Male): The sun god, seen in the sky.

Varuna (Male): Upholds cosmic and natural order.

Vishnu (Male): A relatively minor god that becomes one of the three main gods of Hinduism (along with Brahma and Shiva). He is the preserver and god of creation, the embodiment of goodness, and the god that maintains *dharma*, or goodness.

Vayu (Male): Wind god.

Rudra (Male): An archer that can bring disease.

Prithvi (Female): Goddess of the earth.

Sarasvati (Female): Goddess of knowledge, music, and the creative arts; called the Mother of the Vedas. One form of Saraswati, Gayatri, is the consort of Brahma and can be called through the Gayatri mantra described in chapter 15.[41]

The Deities in the Puranas

By the time the Puranas were written, the deities were more completely defined and their physical features, as well as their moral and mental traits, are quite distinct. The two great epics composing the Puranas—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—along with other principal tantras (placed as early as 500 to 100 BCE through the eighth century CE), are organized as the stories of, or praises to, the gods. They constitute the authority underlying today's Hindu view of the gods.

The three most important of the Puranic gods are the Hindu triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. I describe them here along with other members of the important pantheon.

Brahma (Male): The Supreme God that manifests himself, Vishnu, and Shiva. He is sometimes called Purusha when mated with the Prakriti form of the goddess. He is said to split into his male equivalent, or Parashiva, and his female component, named Parashakti.

Vishnu (Male): As described in the previous section, the one that preserves creation. Krishna is one of his forms; known as the black or dark one, he is worshipped widely. Sometimes Buddha is also seen as a form of Vishnu.

Shiva (Male): The destroyer. He has many forms and names, including Sthnana, "the everlasting," and Panchanana, who has five faces, one of which is Ishana, an internal aspect of consciousness. The other four faces of Panchanana Shiva, also called Panchavaktra Shiva, are Sadashiva (or Ardhanarishvara), Rudra, Aghora, and Mahadeva. Other names for him are Adi Anada, or Supreme Divine Consciousness, or Paramashiva, foundation of the universe.

Sarasvati (Female): As described previously, Brahma's wife, also called Gayatri, Maheshvari (one of the names of Pavarti or Shakti), and Savitri.

Lakshmi (Female): Wife of Vishnu. Also called Padma or Kamala, Dharani, Sita, Sri, and Rukmini.[42]

A Fourth Major Deity: Shakti

If Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, in all their various forms, represent the Hindu triad, or *trimurti*, then Shakti, consort of Shiva,[43] has become the fourth main deity.

She is considered the personification of material energy; hence, kundalini is seen as an expression of Shakti—and the reason for special emphasis on her in this section. She holds many names, including Parvati (Mother Nature),

Kali (passion, sometimes cruel and destructive), Durga (protective, armed for battle), Devi (goddess), and Mataji (respected mother). Other goddesses may also be addressed Shakti when mentioned in the context of being a spouse.

Shakti sometimes replaces Brahma in describing three main types of Hindu worship:

- Vaishnavas worship Vishnu
- Shaivites worship Shiva
- Shaktas worship Shakti[44]

Shakti in Tantric Tradition

Shakti holds particular importance in tantrism. While most of this chapter is devoted to Vedic scripture, I have chosen to explore her tantric relationships here as well. In the tantric tradition Shakti is seen in ten different forms, or the tantric *mahavidya*. In turn, these aspects of the goddess are also subdivided into different names. The core form of Shakti is Kali, who represents the primordial powers of life, death, and transcendence. The remaining Shaktis are often considered aspects of Kali and are variously Tara, Maha Tripura Sundari, Bhuvaneshvari, Chinnamasta, Bhairavi, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi, and Kamala. As Bhuvaneshvari, she is also called Kakini Shakti, a benefactress. Yet another name for Kali is Lakini Shakti, also known as Bhadra Kali, the compassionate form of the usually ferocious Kali.

She is known as Parvati when, as the wife of Shiva, she is considered a maiden or virgin, and she is known as Devi when mature.

In the *Puranas*, Shakti is sometimes said to possess *daivi* (angelic) or *asuri* (demonic) powers; hence she may be called Daivi (or Devi) Shakti or Asuri Shakti. In the form of the kundalini Shakti she holds still more names. One is Rakini or Chakini Shakti, the inspiration of art and music. In Buddhism a goddess is often called a *dakini,* and so Shakti is also Dakini Shakti, the gatekeeper of physical reality. She can be called Shakini as the embodiment of purity and Hakini Shakti, who, when red-faced and ensconced as a

representative goddess in the ajña, indicates a fully awakened kundalini. And in her complete form of kundalini, she is often called Shankhini.[45]

The story of the gods that is perhaps most central to the chakras is the love story of Shakti and Shiva, a brilliant metaphor for spiritual evolution and ultimate union with the Divine. This was more fully explored in chapter 2.

Additional Gods

While there are other gods we could consider in our exploration of this pantheon, I will mention three others before we leave this topic. All can be found depicted in the form of animals.

Ganesh: Elephant god that grants protection and removes obstacles.

Garuda: King of birds that represents five breaths (*vayus*).

Hanuman: The monkeylike god central to the Ramayana.

Leaving the gods now and returning to our tapestry thread, we find that chakras begin to take form in the Upanishads, part of the Vedic scripture. They also emerge in other ways and by other names in other parts of the world. These ancient ideas and the systems they formed are addressed in our next chapter, which also introduces us to some of the basic principles of tantra and yoga, two complex spiritual disciplines that are inextricably linked to the chakras.

Having traveled thousands of years in a mere few pages, you can appreciate the layers of history that contributed to our chakra knowledge today. Like a sparkling gem emerging from eons of sediment, the Vedic canons honed our current chakra concepts and practices, and we have their authors to thank for these insights. How much of this sacred wisdom was indigenous versus transplanted, we'll likely never know. We do know that chakra information was closely tied to the stories of the land and its people, the gods, the Sanskrit language, and the beauty of truth.

This body of knowledge became even more defined through the emergence of texts that stemmed from the basic canons, as well as three branches of thought—the topic of the next chapter.

[contents]

Chakras Taking Form

DIVINING THREE MOVEMENTS FROM THE UPANISHADS AND OTHER EARLY SACRED TEXTS

ALL THINGS MUST come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted.

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

So far, our historical journey has focused on the "spine" of Vedic scripture, the four primary Vedas. Emerging from these earliest of canons is what can be termed an orthodox Hindu world. We might sum it up this way: the Vedic route seeks to liberate the soul from the body through mental training.

Swimming in the same oceanic flux as the early Vedic philosophies were two other intertwining disciplines: tantra and yoga. Tantra is the name given to a particular style of religious ritual that became more defined by the fifth century CE. Although its popularity grew over time, as did its complexity, the term was first mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. Many scholars believe tantra originated with the Vedic population, although they question which came first: tantra or the orthodox philosophies. Tantra, which we will explore more deeply, eventually became linked to Buddhism, Jainism, Zen, Bon, and Sikhism, among other spiritualities, and through Buddhism it spread throughout Asia. It also heavily influenced Hinduism.

In comparison with the Vedic viewpoint, the tantric schools embrace the body and encourage unity with all. Yoga, by contrast, is really a worldview. It is a way of looking at reality that is material while embodying spirituality,

outlining practices that allow integration of body, mind, and soul. Today you can Google the word and discover hundreds of types of yoga. Most, however, are mainly tantric in concept, although orthodox Vedic philosophies still permeate some varieties.

The preceding few paragraphs reflect the simplest discussion of orthodox Vedic or Hindu philosophy, tantra, and yoga we can have. Remaining topics are ripe for argument. Yoga is often identified with tantric philosophies but also with Vedic ideas. Many modern tantric schools separate themselves from Vedic thought, arguing that it was tantra that conceived those Vedic traditions in the first place. On the other hand, many orthodox Hindus insist that the Vedic philosophy was primary and tantra emerged like a child from its Vedic parents.

For our purposes, a key understanding is that most modern versions of orthodox Hinduism, tantra, and yoga incorporate chakra-related ideas. Beyond that, probably the closest way to explain the relationship between these three disciplines is that they are like fraternal triplets. They were born to the same parents but years apart, then sent to different schools. As a result, they understandably have differences as well as a common "blood line."

The reason we are discussing these three branches of the same primordial tree is that by the eighth century BCE, Vedic writings were showcasing terms and philosophies that became owned by each. The most formative of these writings is the Vedic Upanishads, written by roughly 200 CE. Birthing from the Upanishads, as well as other sacred literature, was a developing chakra system, complete with embellishments such as nadis, kundalini, koshas, and more. As you will see in "A History of the Rainbow Serpent" later in this chapter, East India wasn't the only source of kundalini concepts.

The goal here is to introduce you to the emerging strains of thought that could eventually be distinguished as the three branches of the tree. This foundation is meant primarily as a background for further discussions in the rest of part 4 and so you can better understand related chakra systems featured later in this book. Included is a minimal discourse on the question of which came first—tantra, yoga, or Vedic Hinduism.

We will then discuss several actual texts, those that relate specifically to the burgeoning knowledge of chakras and related ideas between approximately 800 BCE and 200 CE. The actual Upanishads I will quote from are separated into two time periods: from 800 BCE to about 200 BCE (or earlier) and from 200 BCE to 200 CE. The dating of the Upanishads is quite difficult, so these categorical distinctions are approximate. After exploring several of these writings, we will look at two other ancient non-Vedic works that are especially important to yoga.

We are not performing a thorough analysis of these texts here; that is an endeavor that has already spanned centuries and continues still. However, we will examine a few important features of each text so you can grasp the developing thinking of our East Indian ancestors in relation to what would ultimately become a spiritual system.

By the end of this chapter we will be ready to leap more fully into chakric developments through the medieval time period, watching what began as a "wheel on a cart" transform into the basis of a revolution.

Ancient Tantric and Yogic Developments: A Brief History in Relation to Orthodox Hinduism

In order to really understand chakras, we must grasp the longstanding traditions of tantra and yoga and their relationship to traditional Hinduism and Vedic thought. As unique as these siblings are, they all involve chakras and chakra-related ideas, simply in different ways. To perceive chakras through their dissimilar "eyes" is to gain interesting perspectives on the chakras.

Most modern people hold certain and often inaccurate perceptions about these three disciplines. When most of us think about tantra, we focus on sexual practices. When we hear the word *yoga*, we immediately say, "I don't think I can bend that far." When we hear the word *Hinduism*, we start counting gods. Yet the truth about both the tantric and yogic branches is that they involve mental, physical, *and* spiritual cultivation, all leading to a liberating insight.[1] Hinduism might feature hundreds if not thousands of gods,

but an essential belief is that there is a Supreme Being behind Creation. As we review the infancy of primarily tantra and yoga in this section, you might be astonished to discover the richness of beliefs that are represented.

Before the Vedic scriptures were written—but not necessarily before they were composed or embodied through oral recitation—we find evidence of tantric and yogic thought and practices being alive and well in the Indus Valley. In fact, archeologists there have discovered statues and paintings of a figure believed to be the god Shiva depicted in meditations and poses. These figures date to at least 3000 BCE.[2]

As we saw in the last chapter, it isn't easy to piece together the sequence of events taking place in antiquity or the identities of its peoples, so you will not be surprised that scholars disagree about this figure. Is the image really Shiva—or even a god at all? Well-respected experts Herbert Sullivan and Shubhangana Atre insist that the figure in question is a female rather than male deity. But for others it is clearly a depiction of a pro-tantric posture aimed at driving the "sperm-marrow-soul fluid up the spinal channel."[3]

Several other similar images are found in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. One shows a ritual scene involving a divine or human figure standing before what is most likely a fig tree, with yet another human figure kneeling or sitting before him/her and an animal with horns. There are seven figures at the bottom of the image who seem female. We don't know exactly how to interpret these images, only that they seem to contain the basic ideas of tantra, which only became a relatively coherent discipline in the writings of Buddhists and Shaivists (worshippers of Shiva) in the ninth and tenth centuries CE. There are elaborate depictions of deities in these illustrated texts, in which the practitioner seems encouraged to identify with a divine figure at the center of a mandala, or a geometric set of deities; fierce male and female deities; elements linked to sex and death; and yogic practices, including sexual ones.[4]

As we shall discover in upcoming chapters, many elements of tantra are similar to those in yoga. According to Paul Williams and Anthony Tribe, authors of *Buddhist Thought*, tantric features include the following: evocation

and worship of deities, use of visualization and mantras, initiation, and positive views of the body.[5] Unlike the views of orthodox Hinduism, the body is considered a pathway to bliss. Also shared among Indian tantric traditions is the assumption of a subtle anatomy made up of nadis and chakras. Prana, or vital energy, flows through this system and with certain practices can be yogicly manipulated to stimulate a transformational awareness.[6] Yoga shares many of the same theorems, while Vedic-related disciplines incorporate only a few.

What Came First: Vedic or Tantric (and Yogic) Traditions?

As I indicated when I introduced this chapter, there are conflicting ideas about the timing of tantric, yogic, and Vedic traditions. Many believe that yoga actually grew from the soil of tantra, and that, in fact, it represents the soul of tantra. Others believe that yoga, and perhaps tantra, sprang from Vedic philosophies. Still others point to tantra as a separate movement and think yoga is perhaps a stepchild of one or the other.

One theory is that tantra influenced the Vedas, not the other way around. This theory holds that during the time the four Vedic canons were written, from approximately 700 BCE onward, the originating tantric spirit became reflected in the Vedanta. This philosophy would assert that tantra and yoga are synonymous paths that have swayed not only Indian philosophy but also most Eastern traditions, from Buddhism to Jainism.

This theory offers an alternative to some of the ideas in chapter 4 in regard to the settling of the Indus Valley. According to certain archeological experts, including P. R. Sarkar, Daniel Daniélou, and N. N. Bhattacharya, as well as genetic scientist Dr. Spencer Wells, there actually was an Aryan invasion into the Indus region, but it occurred thousands of years earlier than scholars have claimed. Instead of 1500 BCE, this invasion happened around 5000 BCE, during which time the region's king systematized tantra and initiated the discipline of ayurveda, the East Indian system of health theory and practice we will feature in chapter 23. (Wells and Sarkar suggest the Aryan invasion occurred over a period of centuries, placing the early portions of the *Rig Veda*, written

outside India under this theory, at 10,000 BCE and the other three texts originating both outside and inside India.) Key to all of this is that the main tantric god was Shiva. It was therefore Shiva's teachings that were represented in early Indian yogic spirituality, art, and science, and that spread beyond India and throughout Europe.[7]

One thing we know with certainty is that tantric and yogic ideas and orthodox Vedic philosophies are all present in the Upanishads, many of which are included in the four Vedic canons. Following you will find an extended look at certain aspects of the Upanishads, drawing upon handpicked citations written between 800 and 200 BCE and between 200 BCE and 200 CE. Two other documents are also featured. We are, of course, especially focused on pulling forth ideas related to chakras.

Early Appearances of the Words Tantra *and* Yoga

We know that, like the word *chakra*, the first known written appearance of *tantra* is found in the Vedas. It appears first in the *Rig Veda*, and there it means "loom." Derived from the root *tan*, it means "to spread" or "to stretch," so tantric concepts are called *tantriki*, meaning "a cloth recently taken off of a loom." Many experts believe that because the word appears in Vedic philosophy, everything that is tantrika, or related to tantric philosophies—mantras and the teachings of the gurus—is *shruti*, revealed word.[8] The term *tantra* also means "loom" in the *Atharva Veda* and *Yajur Veda*, although in the *Sama Veda* it appears to mean "essence."[9]

The word *yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, meaning "to yoke or join together." It is believed that this word is derived from the proto-Indo-European base word *yeug*, meaning "to join."[10] *Yoga* first appears in the Taittiriya Upanishad, written

about 1000 BCE, and refers to the term *pratyahara*, meaning "withdrawal from the physical senses." It has come to represent several ideas: the goal of spirituality, which is union with the Divine; liberation from suffering; and the realization of our true nature. It involves systematic spiritual practices that bring us to this enlightened state.[11]

The Upanishads: Vedic Underpinnings of Chakra Magic

Chakras and their relatives began to take form in the Upanishads, a set of writings often called the "wisdom portion" of the Vedic scripture. Orthodox Hindu, tantric, and yogic ideas about chakras and related concepts can all be found here.

As you learned in chapter 16, the Upanishads constitute one of four parts of each of the four primary Vedas, often described as the wisdom portion, in contrast to sections concerning sacrifice. Most typically, the Upanishads form the concluding sections of the Brahmanas—which deal with mythology, philosophy, and ritual—and the Aranyakas, which discuss ritual. These Vedic sections were quite lengthy and difficult to understand, so the Upanishads were composed to show humanity how to obtain the highest results possible through right action.[12] Because they come at the end of each of the Vedas, the Upanishads are called the Vedanta, meaning "end of the Vedas" (*Veda* means "knowledge" and *anta*, "end"). Considered the core teachings of Indian philosophy, they were originally passed down through oral tradition and were designed to help us push ourselves to the limits of our spiritual potential. They truly are about our ultimate "ending," or potential for enlightenment.

There are three main definitions of the term *Upanishads*. The first is that the word means "sitting down" or "close to," which describes the act of a student listening to the teacher. The classic setting for this was in a forest, with students sitting at the knee of a sage. This definition conjures a picture of

meditative teachings being passed from teacher to student concerning the fundamental truths of the universe.

Another meaning of the term *Upanishad* is "to shatter" or "to destroy," which is what we do when throwing off the fetters of ignorance.[13] Still other scholars highlight a more mysterious aspect of the word's meaning, suggesting that it means "for this meditation is contained in the Mysterious One (that is called Upanishad)."[14]

There are more than two hundred Upanishads in Hindu literature, written across a span of thousands of years. The most recent were inscribed during the medieval and modern periods; the oldest is usually ascribed to about 800 BCE. Not every Upanishad qualifies as a Vedic scripture. One of those that does, called the Muktika and related to the Advaita school that emerged in the seventh century CE, outlines a list of 108 genuine Upanishads, the same number of beads found on the Hindu rosary. The Muktika was most likely written down in about 1000 CE. In general, however, most modern scholars recognize thirteen main Upanishads. The time period usually presented for the compilation of the most important of these sacred writings is between 800 and 400 BCE.[15]

There are many ways of categorizing the Upanishads: by period, Buddhist influence, the subjects they cover, or by association with their respective Brahmanas, the set of Hindu religious prose texts introduced in chapter 16 explaining the relationship of the Vedas to sacrificial ceremonies. Each of the thirteen main Upanishads, however, is associated with the four main Vedic texts and serves as a form of exegesis, or a way to understand the first texts.[16] These foundational writings, as well as other major Upanishads, are considered shruti (revealed knowledge). In fact, if a learned thinker has commented on the ideas of another learned thinker, even this is considered shruti.[17]

The Upanishads are extremely important for anyone seeking chakra knowledge. Not only do they form the basis of many of our modern chakra systems, but they are the basis of many of the philosophies associated with chakra knowledge, including the main reason we attend to the chakras.

In a nutshell, we cultivate our kundalini, virtuous behavior, and our soul (atman) because of a concept called "re-death." Put succinctly, this idea means that birth and death are hard to escape. We continually repeat both birth and death through reincarnation. The means of escaping and conquering this cycle, according to one of the oldest Upanishads, the Brihadaranyaka, emphasizes embracing the cosmic connection underlying ritual. We "climb" the chakra ladder to attain this sense of Brahman, or transcendent consciousness, that comprehends the unity of the universe and our soul's connection to it.[18]

It is through the Upanishads that we find other fundamental teachings, some of which we already touched on in section 1 and others that you'll discover in this chapter; still others will introduce themselves further along. As you continue to move through this book, you'll learn about karma, or the result of our action; samsara, or reincarnation; moksha, or nirvana; and terms we just mentioned—atman, or soul, and Brahman, or the Absolute Almighty. The Upanishads also formulated the doctrines of self-realization, yoga, and meditation.[19]

They speak of *maya*, the belief that life is an illusion, and the five *koshas (or* sheaths, discussed in chapter 2) which prevent us from knowing true reality, as well as the five *pranas (*the vital energy we also visited in part 1).[20] And, thanks to the Upanishads, we now have hundreds of different types of yoga practices introducing us to the state of permanent peace, including common practices such as the *asanas* (poses) and *pranayama* (breathing). It is because of the Upanishads that you'll learn about the three *gunas* (attributes of nature) and about dharma, a universal principle of law. In fact, it is within the *Yoga Kundalini Upanishad* that we learn how to activate our kundalini, inviting its course upward through the nadis and chakras.[21]

Let's examine a few of the earliest Upanishads to discover what our ancestors first said about the chakras and related concepts.

A History of the Rainbow Serpent

Most ancient cultures have postulated a kundalini-like energy that activates higher consciousness. Thomas McEvilley, in his book *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, shares that the philosopher Plato spoke of a divine seed that resides in the brain and also of a kundalini-like soul power embodied in the semen.[22] In a lower-minded person, the divine energy descends and is used for procreating via the semen through sex. In a higher-minded person, the life-giving force within the semen is transferred upward to the brain to give spiritual rather than physical life. Besides explaining this process, which has clear parallels to kundalini rising, Plato also discussed the role of the spine and two other hidden channels next to it. These are comparable to the sushumna, ida, and pingala. Plato also described knots that are reminiscent of the chakras.[23]

The symbolism of kundalini energy also bears similarities to the caduceus image common to ancient Greece. This symbol, depicted on page 49, is called the Caduceus of Hermes or Mercury, the god of communication. According to Greek legend, it is made from a staff with two snakes wrapped around it in a figure-eight shape. The staff is topped with a pinecone and intertwined with ivy, and sometimes features wings at the top. In mythology it is Dionysus, the god of wine and revelry who also represents the metamorphic process of spiritual death and rebirth, who carries the caduceus.

Contemporary mystics perceive the staff as the sushumna nadi, the two snakes as the ida and pingala nadis, and their intertwining as representing kundalini energy rising through the chakras. Given this spiral structure, there is also an allusion to DNA. The pinecone symbolizes the flowering of consciousness; in many cultures, the pinecone represents the pineal gland, the organ associated with the seventh chakra. And the wings signify enlightenment, the release of the soul through the body.[24] As we

can see, this mystical depiction is similar in thought and form to that comprising kundalini activation in Hindu culture.

Thomas McEvilley, a history scholar, investigates the similarities between Egyptian mythology and kundalini. According to him, Osiris, the god of the afterlife, ascended to heaven upon his mother's spinal column, using her vertebrae as rungs on a ladder. The Egyptians also worshipped an amulet of life, which is passed down the spine and could very well mirror kundalini.[25]

Other regions including China have taught several concepts and practices comparable to Hindu kundalini philosophy. For instance, the Taoist alchemists of China employed many energetic practices and techniques to force semen up the spine to the brain, leading to transformation.[26] This example is similar to the theme of kundalini rising from the genital area.

And, on the other side of the world, we find followers of the serpent god Quetzalcoatl in Mexico. Multicolored and feathered, Quetzalcoatl is an Aztec god whose teachings prevailed in much of Mexico for two thousand years. Among the many associations with this figure are resurrection and life, and the energy attributed to this feathered serpent is often compared to that of the serpent in Hindu kundalini lore.[27] Images of the feathered serpent are shown in illustration 3, chapter 2.

The serpent theme is also indigenous to the Australian aboriginals, who depict a rainbow serpent in much of their cave art that is said to suggest the cycle of the seasons and the giving of life. It is also found in dozens of other aboriginal cultures, called the *borlung* by the Miali, *kajura* by the Ingarda, and the *taipan* by the Wikmunkan.[28]

And even certain Christian sects attribute kundalini powers to the Christian Holy Spirit, which is given the feminine name Ruah in the Old Testament. Kundalini has been compared to the flames

that appeared before Jesus's followers at the first Pentecost, and, among the secret Christian brotherhood of the Masons, to a spirit fire that rises through the spinal column.[29]

ॐ

The Earliest Upanishads: Roots of Chakra Consciousness

Several of the early Upanishads introduce chakras and chakra-related concepts in ways we would recognize today. Let's briefly examine a few of these.

Chandogya Upanishad

One of the thirteen main Upanishads, this text is related to the *Sama Veda* and dates to the eighth century BCE. It includes what is usually considered the first identifiable mention of a specific chakra in a passage, identifying the heart as the seat of consciousness in the body, with consciousness taking the form of a lotus. We now numerically describe the heart as the fourth chakra.

This is the passage from this text that is most frequently cited:

> And if they should say to him: "Now with regard to that city of Brahman, and the palace in it, i.e. the small lotus of the heart, and the small ether within the heart, what is there within it that deserves to be sought for, or that is to be understood?"
>
> Then he should say: "As large as this ether (all space) is, so large is that ether within the heart. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars; and whatever there is of him (the Self) here in the world, and whatever is not (i.e. whatever has been or will be), all that is contained within it."[30]

This Upanishad also relates the nadis to the heart center. Following is a translation of that passage (which uses contemporary words but keeps the ancient terms in parentheses).

> There are 101 energy channels (nadis) of the heart existing. One of

them is directed to the skullcap. Through this one, reaching upwards, immortality (Amrita) can be achieved. All other channels are going to various directions—they are doors to death, exitus doorways.[31]

EXERCISE: **A Guided Meditation to Visit the Heart of Brahman**

As is so poetically described in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, the heart is the palace of Brahman, the Supreme Force that underlies and perpetuates all that is. What better way to experience this inner haven than to allow yourself to be guided within?

In a quiet place, take a few deep breaths and allow the winds of the ancient gods to usher you into the inner sanctum of your heart. Feel yourself being blown through the center of a small lotus that is bright and shiny. Right before you enter, you spy a small area filled with an ethereal fog.

As soon as you are fully encompassed within the petals of the lotus, you notice that while at first glimpse this space is small and cloudy, it is actually vast and light filled. Indeed, everything that is important to you, from heaven to earth, seems contained within this eternal space. You perceive all the elements—including air, fire, water, earth, and ether—and know that everything in your life is made of these. You see the stars above your head and the dirt under your feet. And you can sense yourself, a being of free will, a being fully loved by the Creator of all these things.

Drink in the abundance of Brahman in this center of yourself, and when you are ready, ask to be released back to your everyday life. Exit the center of the lotus and return to full consciousness, refreshed and aware of how beautiful this world really is.

Prashna Upanishad

This Upanishad provides a formula for how many nadis there are in the body. Related to the *Atharva Veda*, it is also one of the principal thirteen. The

word *prashna* means "question" in Sanskrit.[32] This text provides a formula for how the nadis branch through the diffused breath:

101 principal nadis

101 x 100 = 10,100 smaller nadis

101 x 100 x 72,000 = 727,200,000 subtler nadis

This means that our bodies contain 727,200,000 nadis.[33]

But wait: there might be even more nadis! In the *Shiva Samhita*, a Sanskrit text on yoga written in the post-Vedic period, the following appears:

> In the body of the human being there are 3,500,000 nadis, out of which fourteen are important.[34]

In chapter 20 we will further explore the various theories of the nadis and the sources of information about them, both through Vedic texts and in writings such as the *Shiva Samhita,* which is a relatively recent text and not one of the Upanishads.

Yoga Kundalini Upanishad

This scripture, although considered a minor Upanishad, is part of the *Krishna Yajur Veda*. In it we learn that there are six chakras plus the sahasrara, or seventh chakra. This is the basic concept that made its way to the Western world three thousand years later. Some specific ideas presented in this Upanishad are as follows:

- Chakras are centers of Shakti, the vital force. (The goddess Shakti will later be linked to kundalini, the life energy that rises through the chakras to clear our issues and invite enlightenment.)
- Chakras are centers of prana, the fundamental energy of the universe.
- Chakras are the ladder for "Mother Kundalini," who travels from chakra to chakra to ultimately identify with the "Supreme Brahman."

In this Upanishad, kundalini is described as the serpent or mystic fire that is the primordial energy. As Shakti it lies dormant in muladhara, the first

chakra, in the center of the body, a pristine force underlying all organic and inorganic matter.

Here we are also invited to be a "wise yogi," one who follows kundalini to the "thousand-petalled lotus" in the crown to achieve samadhi.

All seven chakras are labeled in this scripture with their Sanskrit terms, which are still commonly used today. These are:

First Chakra: Muladhara

Second Chakra: Svadhisthana

Third Chakra: Manipura

Fourth Chakra: Anahata

Fifth Chakra: Vishuddha

Sixth Chakra: Ajña

Seventh Chakra: Sahasrara

The *Yoga Kundalini Upanishad* substantiates the idea that chakras are not gross (physical) in nature. As it states, even if they were perceptible in the body they help to organize, they would disappear at death.[35]

As you can see from these most ancient Upanishads, knowledge of chakras and related ideas such as nadis was taking form and being disseminated even before the calendar shifted from BCE to CE. The next stage of Upanishads resulted in a further structuring of chakra-related concepts and ideas.

Mid-Range Upanishads

Several Upanishads written between 200 BCE and 200 CE help us in our pursuit of knowledge about the development of chakra lore. These include the *Darsana Upanishad*, *Yoga Sikha Upanishad, Yoga-Tattva Upanishad*, *Dhyana Bindu Upanishad*, *and Brahma Upanishad*. Following are highlights of a sampling of these scriptures pertaining to chakra-related concepts.

Darsana Upanishad

The *Darsana Upanishad* is part of the *Sama Veda*. It includes a conversation between a devotee and Lord Dattatreya, an incarnation of Vishnu. This scripture relates to the eightfold path of yoga. It describes the chakras and their locations, mantras, bijas, elements, various forms of meditation, and the nadis. Some of the text is quite beautiful:

> Om! Let there be Peace in me!
> Let there be Peace in my environment!
> Let there be Peace in the forces that act on me![36]

In the next text we find the use of the asanas—the physical poses of yoga practice, some of which were introduced to you in part 3—and learn the names associated with several of the chakras as a part of a cleansing breathing process. For example:

> The wise man would sit in Swasthikasana, draw his breath till it fills up from head to toe and hold it in two feet, mooladhara, stomach, middle of the heart, bottom of the neck, jaw, middle of the eyelids, forehead and at the top of the skull.[37]

Swasthikasana is the name of a seated yoga pose, and the reference to the "mooladhara" is to the first chakra. Other areas of the body included in this passage also relate to chakra sites.

In addition, the author recommends the use of various mantras, or sounds related to the chakras, such as *ham*, *yam*, and *ram*, all of which you had the chance to explore in part 3.[38]

Yoga Sikha Upanishad

The *Yoga Sikha Upanishad* belongs to the *Krishna Yajur Veda*. *Yoga sikha* means "head of the yogas," hinting at the contents of this Upanishad, which contains "the secrets of yoga" and what are considered to be revelations from the Supreme God. It imparts what is called *advaita,* or the principle of monism, which states that there is no separation between the Supreme Self and the individual self. Rather, the world is but an illusion, or *maya*.

This Upanishad also references the *siddhi*, or magical powers, said to awaken inside the chakras as kundalini courses through them; it also underlines the importance of *jnana*, or knowledge, and yoga to achieve salvation and presents a practice called *maha yoga* (great yoga), a combination of Mantra, Laya, Hatha, and Raja forms of yoga.

In this Upanishad the body is compared to the temple of Shiva and the seat of kundalini. The seven main chakras are referenced, as is the use of a *nadha,* or inner sound, called the Sabda Brahma.[39]

Following is an excerpt from the *Yoga Sikha Upanishad*:

> For all those who have a body, their body is the temple of Shiva. It can give them occult powers. The triangular part in between the anus and penis is called the mooladhara. This is the place where Shiva lives as a life giving force. There the Parashakthi called Kundalini lives. From there wind is produced. The fire is also produced from there.[40]

Yoga-Tattva Upanishad

The Yoga-Tattva Upanishad is classified as a minor Upanishad in the Advaita canon and deals with the practice of yoga. *Yoga tattva* means "yoga-truth," and the scripture is dedicated to yogis who desire to become "freed from all sins through the hearing and the studying of it."[41]

This text discusses the seven basic chakras, various postures and their purposes, breathing techniques, foods to eat or avoid, sexual practices (such as abstinence), the *bija (*sound mantras), and the five elements, which we related to the chakras in part 2.

This is a good document to use as a further introduction to the *siddhi*, or occult powers, stimulated within the chakras by the kundalini as it arises. As K. Narayanasvami Aiyar translates it, these powers include clairvoyance, clairaudience, transportation between great distances, and great powers of speech, among others. Included also are the abilities to take different forms, become invisible, levitate, and transmute iron into gold.[42] The following

exercise can help you pinpoint any of the siddhis that have already activated within you.

The Yoga-Tattva Upanishad also links the five elements—*prithvi* (earth), *apas* (water), *agni* (fire), *vayu* (air), and *akasa* (essence or ether)—to various regions of the body. In this text the areas of the body governed by the elements differ somewhat from what the chakras are seen to govern; for instance, prithvi (earth) is associated with the area between the feet and the knees. Every element is also represented by a shape and a sound. Elements are associated with many chakric, spiritual, and healing systems, and you will find them discussed in other pertinent chapters.[43]

EXERCISE: **A Self-Assessment—Which Siddhis Have You Already Activated?**

When I was first introduced to chakras and kundalini decades ago, I also heard mention of the siddhis, the magical powers available to the kundalini initiate. I was surprised to discover that I had already experienced a few of the siddhis, even as a child, although I considered myself far from enlightened. You might have had the same experience.

Many of us are born with certain chakras already awakened. We can carry over powers from a past life or activate them in utero. We might also trigger siddhis as we move through childhood or adulthood. The purpose of this exercise is to take a brief "time out" from our left-brain learning and use your intuitive right brain to assess the state of your siddhi.

I have simplistically organized the siddhis by chakras, as I did in part 2, but am only featuring a few for this exercise. To perform a more complete assessment on yourself, return to part 2's individual chakra chapters.

As I guide you through questions about your experiences with the siddhis, focus on the related chakra and recall whether you've ever experienced any of the specific abilities or similar ones. You can then

decide if you'd like the spirit of Brahman, whom we speak of in this chapter, to further activate these gifts for you easily and safely.

First Chakra (In Your Hips): Have you ever experienced a burst of intense physical strength or power? Do your five senses ever provide you with insights or otherworldly knowledge? Can you hold objects or touch people and know what is occurring within them, or perhaps sense where objects should be placed in the environment for higher purposes? Think of all the ways you understand the world through your physical sensations and label these your siddhi powers.

Second Chakra (In Your Abdomen): In what ways do you feel like you have tunneled through a "dark night of the soul" to emerge with more understanding about the light in the world? This inner awareness is a siddhi unto itself. How often do you sense others' feelings or needs, or create from your emotional imagination? Embrace these abilities as siddhi.

Third Chakra (In Your Solar Plexus): Have you ever recovered from a disease or illness, having taken the steps to self-heal? How often do you simply know something without knowing why or attune to others' motivations? These are all ways of "setting fire" with your mind and using the third chakra's siddhis.

Fourth Chakra (In Your Heart): There are many gifts linked with the fourth chakra, including advanced knowledge of the past, present, and future, the ability to hear and see intuitively, and an aptitude for out-of-body travel. How often have you experienced any of these capabilities? In what ways have you ever served as a healer—either through the laying on of hands or simply the sending of a prayer, a wish, or a dream to another—and spied a difference? Embrace these powers of healing, for they are yours to use wisely and in service to love.

Fifth Chakra (In Your Throat): Does your spiritual knowing seem ancient and universal? Are you able to intuitively sense or hear

messages? Are you known as a good teacher or eloquent writer or perhaps a persuasive communicator? These are all indications of fifth chakra siddhis.

Sixth Chakra (In Your Forehead): Are you intuitively visual, able to sense what is true or sense the future through this capability? Do you have a sense of others' auras? Have you used some of the ancient means of divining knowledge or the future in order to assess truth, such as interpreting the movement of clouds, seeing the future in a crystal ball, or receiving messages through means such as the tarot, palm reading, or I Ching? You have sixth chakra siddhis.

Seventh Chakra (On the Top of Your Head): Do people often tell you that you are uncharacteristically wise? Do you have a sense of spiritual knowing? Are you aware of the presence of otherworldly spirits? Do you sense that you can feel what the Divine wants for yourself or others? Are you able to resist using supernatural powers if it doesn't feel right? You are gifted with seventh chakra siddhis.

After assessing your siddhi abilities, review what you found to see if there are patterns. Do your abilities seem stronger in certain chakras rather than others? Are there gifts you'd like to develop further; if so, how? Allow yourself to return to this exercise over and over again if it accelerates your growth.

Dhyana Bindu Upanishad

The *Dhyana Bindu Upanishad* can be translated as "secret teachings in support of meditation." The term *bindu* means "drop" or "pearl." A representation of this is the colored mark some Hindus wear between their eyebrows. Within this Upanishad the bindu represents the essence of life, an elixir that supports our entire being.

This scripture is purportedly associated with the *Sama Veda*. While it shares only four physical postures, it says that there are as many asanas as there are living beings. In line with other Upanishads, it focuses on Brahman and a six-

fold yoga path, referring to the chakras, chakra petals, bija, mantras, and more.

This is also a good Upanishad to examine for its focus on the monosyllable *om*. Also called the pranava, *om* is the ultimate sound, one that conveys wholeness, as it represents Brahman.[44] The three Sanskrit letters creating this sound are "a," "u," and "m," and each are linked with a distinctive element, color, place, and *guna* (one of the three states of mind referenced in the Bhagavad Gita and further explored in part 5 and elsewhere in this book).[45]

As the scripture says,

> The sacred word Om is the bow, the Atman (Self) is the arrow, Brahman (the Supreme) is said to be the mark.[46]

Brahma Upanishad

The *Brahma Upanishad* is part of the *Yajur Veda*. Its main contribution to our chakra investigation is its mention of four places occupied by the *purusha,* or soul: the navel, heart, throat, and head. These locations, comparable to chakras, represent four states of consciousness and four gods, as follows:

CHAKRA	STATE	GOD
Navel	Waking consciousness	Brahma
Heart	Dreamless sleep	Vishnu
Throat	Dreaming	Rudra (a form of Shiva)
Head	Transcendent state	Akshara [47]

It is said that Brahma threads through all bodily areas and states as the transcendent state that shines in all that exists and does not exit.[48]

EXERCISE: **Becoming the Peace of the Ancient Texts**

Repeat the *Darsana Upanishad's* lyrical text from page 327 again in your mind, this time letting yourself drop into the energy and meaning of the words. What if you were truly able to embrace the peace within? The peace outside of you? The peace that operates upon you? What if

you were able to constantly generate this peace and be a model for others?

Pronouncing the Oldest Written Language in the World

People spend entire lifetimes engaged in the study of Hindu scriptures in their original Sanskrit, and we can only scratch the surface of this topic here. Still, since many words related to the chakras were initially coined in this oldest written language—including the names of the main chakras themselves—a little information on pronunciation may be helpful. Speaking Sanskrit words aloud is one way to connect to the ancient wisdom that was first captured in the classic texts.

Vowels

Every Sanskrit vowel except one (l.i) has two forms, a short and long form. The long form, marked with a bar above it when words are presented phonetically, is pronounced twice as long as the short. Thus in the words nīla (blue) and gōpa (cowherd), the first syllable is held twice as long as the second. Here are the vowels:

-

• a	• as in	• up
• ā	•	• father
• i	•	• give
• ī	•	• see
• u	•	• put
• ū	•	• rule

• ri	•	• written
• rī	•	• written (but held twice as long)
• e	•	• they
• ai	•	• aisle
• o	•	• go
• au	•	• cow
• l.i	•	• able

Consonants

Consonants are generally pronounced as in English but with some differences. The consonant ph is pronounced as the English p, for example, followed by h, as in haphazard. The bh is as in abhor. A series of retroflex consonants—t., t.h, d., d.h, n., and sh—is pronounced almost like English except with the tip of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. Such pronunciation does not exist in English and accounts in part for the distinctive nature of East Indian accents.

Otherwise, the pronunciation of consonants is quite familiar:

•

• ch	• as in	• change
• ñ	•	• banyan
• ň	•	• sing

• m.	•	• mother
• h	•	• happy
• g	•	• gold
• j	•	• jelly
• ś	•	• ship
• h.	•	• is a slight h

To apply these guidelines to our discussion of chakras, you can experiment with saying the Sanskrit names of the primary seven chakras aloud, lengthening the pronunciation of the vowels shown with a line above them. Sounding the names, you will hear echoes from the ancient tradition that passed subtle body knowledge orally from one person to another.

First Chakra: Mūlādhāra

Second Chakra: Svādhisthāna

Third Chakra: Manipūra

Fourth Chakra: Ānāhata

Fifth Chakra: Viśuddha (often spelled "vishudda" in English)

Sixth Chakra: Ājñā

Seventh Chakra: Sahasrāra [49]

Non-Vedic Texts from Ancient Times

Most contemporary yoga systems employ chakras to aid their practitioners in gaining self-realization and well-being using scriptural sources other than the Vedas. Two in particular are among the best known:

Mahabharata

The Mahabharata is the longest epic in the world, consisting of 100,000 verses that chronicle the evolution of yoga. Dated between the ninth and fourth centuries BCE, it reflects the transition between the origins of yoga in the Upanishads and the systematized traditions of Patanjali, whose sutras, or aphorisms, are discussed further along.

Included in the Mahabharata is the famous Bhagavad Gita, circa fourth century BCE, a good part of which is devoted to the practices of yoga, already considered ancient by that era; Krishna is presented as reestablishing yoga teachings originating in primordial times. The teachings include practices such as breathing and concentration. In the "Gita," as it is affectionately known, the terms *yoga* and *yogi* occur about nine hundred times, often associated with practices and techniques that had been widely accepted for centuries.[50]

To this point, the Vedic philosophies of yoga have dominated. Yoga has been presented as a way of being, a "becoming" done through "ceasing" one's self.[51] We are gradually introduced to the idea of holding the body steady and controlling breathing, energy, and the mind, always to perceive Brahman and free ourselves from bondage.[52] But in general, until we get to the later ones, most of the Upanishads are not specific about this; they do not offer a systematic philosophy. This changes in one big leap.

Yoga Sutra of Patanjali

The *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali is a non-Vedic Sanskrit text based on the Vedas. Dated to roughly the second century BCE, these *sutras*, or "threads" of wisdom, now represent one of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy: Raja yoga, the yoga of wisdom.

Patanjali's teaching focuses on achieving *purusa*, an awareness of the innermost conscious self or soul. It is considered the foundational text of the path of Raja yoga, and in it Patanjali prescribes eight limbs or steps, the sum of which constitute Ashtanga yoga: instruction for living a meaningful, purposeful, and moral life while directing our attention toward health and our spiritual nature. This scripture, which includes 196 aphorisms, provides a

theoretical and consistent philosophical basis for yoga and clarifies several esoteric concepts.

The Eight Limbs of Raja Yoga

The esoteric knowledge Patanjali captured in the *Yoga Sutra* encompasses eight limbs, or steps, of yoga. Following are brief encapsulations of these limbs, drawing upon the classic translations of Sanskrit scholar Rammurti S. Mishra. Following each of his interpretations, in parentheses, is another, often more commonly encountered interpretation of the sutras. (You will find these terms elsewhere in the book, as they became a firmly entrenched tradition in worldwide chakra knowledge.)

Yamas: Following specific resolutions to lead life in the light of truth. (This is often translated as self-control: refraining from selfish actions, words, and thoughts that harm others.)

Niyamas: Five methods of activity of body and mind to lead life toward truth. (This involves the cultivation of positive virtues such as purity and devotion to God.)

Asanas: Postures and exercises to refine mind and body for the purpose of studying truth and to express the free flow of psychic processes through the physiological mechanism. (These are the physical poses we often associate with the word *yoga*.)

Pranayama: Control of *prana,* or energy; expansion of individual energy into cosmic energy. (Control of vital energy; regulation of breathing rhythm.)

Pratyahara: Displacement of psychic energy from the lower plane and its sublimation to higher purposes. (Discriminating restraint of the senses from sense objects; reconditioning the nervous system to go beyond pleasure and pain.)

Dharana: Fixation of attention on a particular object or idea. (Concentration; the first stage of meditation during which the senses are gradually brought under control and concentration deepens.)

Dhyana: Focusing of attention on a particular spiritual idea in continuous meditation. (Unbroken concentration, contemplation; the second stage of meditation during which the mind is gradually brought under control.)

Samadhi: Identification of the mind with Supreme Consciousness. (Deep concentration in which the mind becomes still and is transcended; self-realization.)[53]

As you can see, chakraology began to mature through writings including the Upanishads and Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*, writings that have joined others to place chakra medicine concepts in three arenas: Hindu orthodoxy, tantric philosophy, and yoga practices. The maturation process led to distinct categories of subtle energy structures, including the chakras but also the nadis, koshas, and kundalini. We've now been introduced to the most vital of chakra considerations, those that appear in chakra books and schools around the modern world.

Having been transported through the Indus Valley and the long history of Vedic scripture, we are now ready to turn to equally potent sources of chakra knowledge: tantric and yogic texts.

[contents]

Following the Light of Tantra and Yoga

> DARKNESS CANNOT DRIVE out darkness; only light can do that.
>
> MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Concurrent with the development of orthodox Hinduism, also called Brahman Hinduism, was tantra and its counterpart, yoga. As we saw in the last chapter, all three disciplines have roots in the Indus Valley, which hosted a Bronze Age civilization between roughly 3300 and 1300 BCE and at that time extended from what today is northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and also included northwest India. It was basically located in the basins of the Indus River. At some level, all three spiritual practices—Hinduism, tantra, and yoga—started here, and all incorporate, to at least some extent, knowledge encompassing chakra-related ideas. Tantra and yoga especially incorporate chakra medicine practices, some of which date back thousands of years.

In chapters 16 and 17 we explored the Upanishads and other sacred texts. We illuminated core chakra-related concepts in the East Indian region and other parts of the world. We are now going to turn primarily to the study of tantra and yoga, as these movements are also fundamental to chakra knowledge.

Our dive into these subjects will span several centuries. After discussing what tantra is and what it means, we will establish an overview of its history, starting in ancient eras and moving forward in time. We will also list and briefly describe many of the tantric texts, providing brief explanations of what they have added to the development of chakra wisdom. Also included is

a section on the major developments of yoga during four main periods of time.

As we look to the waning light of times long past, know that we are also making way for the emerging wisdom of a new dawn. To know what has occurred in the past is to empower ourselves to create a new future—one that, in our case, includes chakra medicine.

What Is Tantra?

Tantra is the name given to a certain style of spiritual rituals, attitudes, and meditations that arose in ancient times, becoming a more formal body of knowledge by the fifth century CE. Many tantric sects, whether stand-alone or integrated within yoga or other religions, include chakra-related concepts.

The first time the word *tantra* appeared in written form was in the Vedic scripture; specifically, we now emphasize, the *Rig Veda*. In this context it meant "loom," evoking a thread within a fabric. Since this first mention, this long-standing philosophy has interwoven itself in practice and writings throughout India, Asia, and into the Western Hemisphere, among Hindu, Sikh, Bon, Buddhist, and Jain religions, spreading mainly through Buddhism to East and Southeast Asia. Some believe it a religion unto itself; others, a spiritual discipline or process; and still others, a conglomeration of beliefs and practices organized around a set of tenets that encourages love of life and expansion of consciousness.

As you explore this chapter, you will see that many divisions have emerged within tantra—divisions of both philosophy and practice. One way to see tantra is as a bread starter that has been shared around the world. It can be used in rye, wheat, or white bread, or in cakes, biscuits, or loaves. Whatever—or whomever—it touches is asked to embrace life and the spirit within themselves.

Overall, the main goal of a tantric discipline is to enable enlightenment through the awakening of the true self. On a universal level, tantra seeks to usher all of humanity out of ignorance and lead people back to a state of bliss, not by tuning out but by tuning in. By their very definition, chakras and

other energy bodies are an intrinsic part of most tantric (and modern yoga) practices. They are the ladder between the seen and the unseen—a means of clearing the body, mind, and soul and rousing ourselves toward wisdom.

There are a number of more scholarly definitions of tantra, and these classifications can be dissimilar. Tantra, a way of living and being as well as a set of practices (especially yogic practices), is also a set of ideas. As such, the tantric tradition stems from writings called the Tantras. Many experts believe a tantric text only deserves the name if it meets the criteria established in a particular scripture called the Kamika Tantra. A truth or writing can be called tantric—the root *tan* meaning "to spread," and yet another root word, *tatri*, meaning "knowledge"—if it constitutes great knowledge about the *tattva,* or "principles of reality," and sacred mantras. The goal is to achieve *tra*, or liberation.

Another widely accepted definition of a tantric text was offered by Ramakantha, a tenth-century CE tantric scholar, who described it as a divinely revealed body of teachings that presents both what is necessary and what is a hindrance in the practice of worshipping God. A tantra must also outline specialized initiation and purification ceremonies.[1]

No matter how diverse the definitions of tantra, all tantric ideas start and end with the notion that the universe is a concrete manifestation of the divine godhead. It is this god, this One, that creates and sustains the universe. We can touch this Oneness through our own methods aimed at emancipation.[2]

There are common activities involved in all tantric sects or practices. Typically one masters tantric practices through initiation by a guru, or a wise teacher. This style of spiritual teaching achieved prominence in India about fifteen hundred years ago. The student practitioner is called a sadhaka, tantrika, or tantra-yogin if male and a sadhika or tantra-yogini if female. A male adept is known as a *siddha,* or accomplished one, and a female adept, a *siddha-angana*.

The actual path of evolution is often referred to as *sadhana* (practice), and spiritual attainment is called *siddhi,* or perfection, a word that can also mean attainment of miraculous powers. All tantra is considered a gospel to assist us

in dealing with the darkness of the Kali Yuga, the era we currently occupy. Desperate times sometimes call for desperate measures, and this line of thinking has sometimes led to tantric sects in which it seems that "anything goes."[3]

In most branches of tantra, a master provides instruction in techniques that aid in the attainment of spiritual awareness and siddhi powers. Techniques that we've been calling chakra-related or functionally associated with chakra medicine include the following:

- Yoga practices, including asanas (bodily movements) and activation of the chakras through kundalini or prana exercises such as breathing or meditation
- Mudras, which are usually hand gestures, although they can also involve other parts of the body
- Mantras (syllables, words, and phrases)
- Mandalas (geometric symbols representing something of meaning)
- Yantras (symbolic diagrams of the forces in the universe)
- Identification with deities
- Use of visualization (in some tantric branches)
- Many make use of chakras and nadis to clear issues and to embrace astrology and alchemical ideals

Central to the all tantric ideology is Lord Shiva, believed to be the author of tantric knowledge, who granted his power to his divine consort, Shakti (also known as Parvati). Shakti, in turn, made these truths available to humankind. Kundalini is often considered Shakti energy. When we are awakening our kundalini, we are inviting Shakti to rise upward through our chakras, preparing us for the meeting of Shakti and Shiva in our seventh chakra. Their merging enables our full awakening. When our "lights go on," we can again perceive our unity with the All, or Brahman.

Most typically, a full tantric practice includes three stages: purification, elevation, and affirmation of one's true identity on the plane of pure

consciousness.[4]

We could explain these processes using contemporary terms in these ways:

Purification: Cleansing one of blocks or toxins. Purification could involve any number of diets, asanas, exercises, or means of abstinence, as well as the lifting of the veils (kosha sheaths) examined in chapter 2. From a modern point of view, we would add that chakra medicine is also performed through clearing and cleansing the chakras and the release of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual toxins or issues.

Elevation: We elevate ourselves through right action, speech, attitude, breathing, and more.

Affirming of True Self: The goal of tantric paths is to realize our true selves—the divine nature that already lies within but needs to be "struck" to shine forth.

All tantric rituals aim to help practitioners access the supernatural through the mundane, or the macroscopic through the microscopic. They also enable followers to direct prana for goals both personal and spiritual. And almost every tantric sect asks the practitioner to identify him- or herself with the deities. The exact deities employed are dependent on the sect; for instance, Buddhic practitioners will align with Buddha. Because tantra developed hand in glove with early Vedic Hinduism, however, the Hindu gods and goddesses are emphasized, especially Shiva and Shakti.

These deities might be worshipped with dancing or singing, sexual practices, or secret rituals: ordinary rituals to which are added activities such as defecation, feasting, sex, and more. It is often the use of sexuality that divides one form of tantra from another, at least from a modern perspective.

A History of Tantra

There are hundreds of schools of tantra and related philosophies, as well as multiple associations of tantra with various other forms of spirituality, religions, and cultures. What they all have in common is a unique Hindu tradition.

According to legend, all initial tantric texts came directly from dialogues between Shiva, the "Lord of Yoga," and Shakti, the "Great Goddess." Because of their divine source, these scriptures are considered *shruti*, or revealed. Also according to legend, yogi siddhas overheard a few of these discussions and their students wrote them down. As were the Vedic scriptures, the tales were passed down orally, often by the use of symbols through the arts, such as painting, music, dancing, and sculpture.

The actual written tantras are the latest of the Hindu sacred writings and are called Shastras, yet the *Atharva Veda* was one of the earliest and main Vedic sources of tantric scripture. As well, the Upanishads contain much material that could be called tantric. In addition, several tantric *agamas*—another word meaning "revealed"—are often referred to as Shiva tantras. These are ritualistic in nature.

Northern and Southern India have their own traditions concerning the tantras, but all emphasize Shiva, Shakti, and the siddhas. Tantric texts also include Hindu works that are about alchemy, sorcery, and astrology.

In general, tantric practices developed parallel to Hinduism based on the Vedas and grew in private. The earth-based and sometimes erotic tantric practices remained somewhat separate but were also absorbed into various branches of Hinduism. Buddhism also became saturated with tantric ideas, as did several other religions. Eventually what emerged was a disparity that could be distinguished as the Brahmanic Hindus versus the *sramana*—the wisdom-oriented rather than earth-centered ideologies.[5]

In fact, the tantric tradition is similar in many ways to occult Buddhist tradition, even in the way wisdom is passed down. It is said that Gautama the Buddha transferred esoteric and metaphysical teachings to disciples by initiation and by word of mouth. Such is the way the tantras were transmitted, passed secretly from teacher to student, until they were finally written down between the sixth and eleventh centuries CE.

There are numerous tantras, Hindu and Buddhist, all created by yogis, yoginis, priests, scholars, and philosophers. As in orthodox Hindu tradition, they are usually based on earlier works but also occult songs and

metaphysical studies in astronomy, alchemy, medicine, and more. As I noted in the previous sections of this chapter, sacred sex, literal or allegorical, is an oft-mentioned topic. However, nearly all tantric texts include ritual matter and instruction in yoga and philosophy.[6] To call a text tantric is to assign it to the lineage of revelation.

There are three main tantric traditions based on these texts: Dakshina, Vama, and Madhyama. These relate to the three *shaktis* (powers) of Shiva and are represented by the three gunas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—that are explored in several chapters in this book.

Dakshina is sattva, the most right-handed of the tantric branches; Vama is rajas and mixed between right and left-handed; and Madhyama is tamas, or left-handed.[7]

The original tantras are divided into three main groups according to the deity chosen for worship. Each deity is the foundation for a different type of tantra, which I have listed here:

Vishnu: Vaishnava tantra, a form of tantra centered in Bengal, India. It is usually considered a left-handed tantra, although there are practitioners who are left or right handed. This form helps practitioners achieve spirituality through the five senses, including sexual love.

Shiva: Shaiva tantra, a Kashmir-based Tantrism that is monistic, idealistic, and transcendental. The goal is to merge into Shiva or universal consciousness.

Shakti: Shakta tantra, a denomination of Hinduism that focuses on worship of Shakti, the Divine Mother. The roots of Shaktism were most likely present 22,000 years ago.[8]

Our Subtle Body Emerges from the Texts

Some of the tantras are lost to antiquity, having been written on palm leaves or insubstantial paper. Some were never written or published at all. Others have been recently "discovered," and we are even now digesting them. Always they were seen as heretical and extremist in relation to orthodox Hinduism or Buddhism, but all contributed to the trail of crumbs leading to

our current understandings of the chakras.[9] The extensive array of tantric scriptures most applicable to the chakra sleuth—including the *Puranas*, *Agamas*, *Samhitas*, and a category known simply as the *Tantras*—describe a form of yoga called tantric yoga. Within these writings we find the use of the subtle body, including the chakras and the nadis. These must be penetrated by meditation to bring about enlightenment. In fact, by the eleventh century CE a yogin was defined as someone who understands the chakras and other subtle body concepts.[10]

One particular tantric philosophy that shows up in many contemporary chakra systems is the thought that intercourse encourages the flow of substances through the body. For centuries, this "tantric yoga" was a way to live one's life. Some sects continued this practice as an internal process and others as an external practice that involved sexual acts between two or more people.[11] The chakras were—and are—frequently used as tools in these internal or external alchemical processes.

Within the trika school of tantra, one differentiates between the physical, subtle, and causal bodies, a distinction we will discuss further later on. And one specific tantra, the Siddha Siddhanta Paddhata, highlights six chakras called the *pindas* (spheres), adding even more subtle levels of distinction. Basically, tantric yogins and yoginis, the male and female followers of tantric yoga principles, used to—and still do—use the chakras to intensify their experiences. By grasping the subtle realms of existence, they seek to know themselves and the world.[12]

Over time, what eventually emerged from tantric practices can be called "tantric medicine," devoted to healing the split between the subtle and physical body. It became clear that on the subtle level change is immediate, although it trickles slowly into the physical body and takes even longer to become stable. The goal of tantric practices is to address karmic issues, or blocks in the subtle field.

Different types of tantric yoga have emerged over time. Hatha yoga uses several types of physical purification practices as well as self-purification on the energetic level. Tantric yoga embraces energetic practices as well as

visualization, breath control, and more, preventing physical disease and mental duress by removing energetic blockages. Still other tantric practitioners might use methods derived from the *Yoga Sutra* or ayurveda, an East Indian form of medicine we will feature in chapter 23. In south India a unique form of tantric healers, the *cittars*, use their own medicine. Called a science of the mind, their method employs inorganic substances, including salts and metals, in addition to energetics.

Tantric teachers might work with any number of chakras: five, seven, nine, ten, eleven, or many more. Does this mean that these teachers are not unified? No, it simply means that a variety of chakra models can serve as a framework for advancement.[13]

A Closer Look at the Divisions of Tantra

There are two main tantra paths and Hindu and Buddhist forms of each. It will be helpful to have a sense of these divisions, called hands, before examining the history of tantra, in order to better comprehend how tantra developed over the centuries.

The two paths are called the "left-hand path," or *vamachara* in Sanskrit, and the "right-hand path," or *dakshinachara* in Sanskrit. The main difference between the two lies in how they use the sacraments.

Left-hand tantric practitioners use the actual elemental sacraments, and right-handers use symbolic alternatives. The tools used in left-hand tantra are offensive to Hindu Brahmin, which leads to this tantra sometimes being called "black tantra" or "black magic" in contrast to right-hand tantra's nicknames of "white tantra" or "white magic."

Left-hand tantric sects might employ the literal use of five main sacramental practices, which are beef eating, fish eating, alcohol drinking, mudras, and sex rites. The right-hand path is definitely more passive and orderly and strives for internal and external moderation.[14]

There are other generic ways to subdivide tantra, such as by three schools: kaula, mishra, and samaya. Kaula employs external rituals, including sex;

mishra uses external and internal techniques; and samaya is entirely internal. The majority of kaula schools are left-handed.

There is great mystery shrouding the primarily kaula left-handed sects. In many left-handed tantric groups, such as Kashmir Shaivism, related tantric texts suggest a devotee must worship Shakti with all five symbolic practices, sometimes every day and sometimes at important times such as during the new moon. Yet other texts merely emphasize the awakening of kundalini and Shakti's unification with Shiva. Various scriptures contradict each other, some suggesting that these practices, called *makaras*, should be taught by a master to a student, some that they must be undertaken internally. Others basically proffer orgies and other group-sex behaviors.

The core aim of left-hand tantra practices is the physical union of a man and a woman, seen to replicate the joining of Shiva and Shakti, male and female, the sun and the moon, and other dualities. Some schools recommend this joining take place within the self, others between partners, and still others in ceremony or during a group gathering.[15]

One of the most contemporary applications of left-hand tantra is to offer followers ways to enhance their sexuality and their sexual experience with another from a spiritual point of view. This personalized expression of tantra has evolved as time has passed and is now part of what is often called neo-tantra, a contemporary term for sects and practices that focus primarily on the sexual pleasure felt by a couple in union. This is a Western term and acts as a shorthand for the Western practice of tantra, which often lacks the ritualistic classical practices.[16]

Neo-tantrikas (*tantrika* meaning a practitioner of tantra) concentrate on raising chi or kundalini through the chakras, using touch, breath, and invisible connection to create health and happiness. These practices can be done by a couple in private or in a temple-like setting with others. Group rituals are called *pujas* and begin with the clearing of negative feelings such as fear and anger. Individuals call light up their spine and touch each chakra and might then form two circles. The inner and outer circles face one another and might touch their partner's heart chakra and clasp hands. The circle

moves clockwise until everyone on the inside has connected with the hearts of everyone on the outside.[17]

Regardless of the divisions and details, we know that the basic tantric beliefs, no matter their exact timing, are aboriginal and shamanic in nature and therefore embrace the divine Mother and Father. In this scenario we might envision a person—and ourselves—as a child deserving of spiritual grace.

Avalon Spotlights Three Texts

Three tantric texts are of particular importance to Western chakra experts. Arthur Avalon, the pseudonym of Sir John Woodroffe, translated these early in the twentieth century. These and others he cites are arguably the most well-known resources of chakra and other energetic information in the West. In fact, Avalon's book *The Serpent Power*, which covers seven chakras, is the reason most Western chakra systems outline seven chakras.[18] *The Serpent Power* is based on the Sat Chakra Nurapana and the Paduka Panchakra, two works on Laya yoga.

These are both tantric yoga works and hold an eminent place for presenting information about the activation of kundalini, nadis, and chakras, in addition to all other terms introduced in chapter 2. Within the Sat Chakra Nurapana, we find the interdependence of yoga and tantra embodied in a beautiful passage within the text:

> Now I speak of (the first step) sprouting shoot of the Yoga plant of complete realization of the Brahman, which is to be achieved, according to the Tantras, by means of the six Cakras and so forth in their proper order.[19]

According to this writing, there are six major chakras, which we've already labeled as muladhara (first), svadhisthana (second), manipura (third,) anahata (fourth), vishuddha (fifth), and ajña (sixth). Atop this is the seventh chakra, sahasrara.[20]

A Review of Vedic and Tantric Traditions

It is tempting to treat the Indian traditions of Vedic orthodoxy and tantric philosophy as if they are members of completely different families or even different worlds. In fact, over the last few thousand years there have been arguments between the two traditions about which is right or wrong or came first or second.

The Vedic path is often called Brahman or orthodox Hindu tradition. Tantric traditions are often described with the term *sramana* (or *shramana*), an ancient Sanskrit term describing traditions such as yoga, Jainism, and Buddhism, as well as certain schools of Hinduism, that embrace the idea of *samsara* (reincarnation) and *moksha* (liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth). Another prevalent concept was of karma, or the idea of working through our issues over lifetimes.[21]

Describing tantra as sramana emphasizes the fundamental philosophy that anyone, no matter their background, gender, race, or class, can strive toward enlightenment. As a movement, sramana refers to the renunciation of ascetic traditions from the first century BCE onward in India, especially in relation to the Brahmin priests, who represented the strict regulations of the Vedic scripture. In the Upanishads, however, we can see an integration of the Brahman Hindu emphasis on the identification of self with Brahman with the various ritualistic practices of tantra and yoga. Tantric ideas added the idea of personal responsibility to the repetitive standards of the earlier Vedic texts. This interrelationship most likely suggests that the two movements developed side by side and are not as different as debaters might suggest.

Quite often, a cursory review of literature would perceive the Vedic/Brahman tradition as patriarchal and structured and the tantric tradition as personal and matriarchal. The Vedic tradition is often associated with the Aryans and the tantric with the indigenous Dravidians. It is said that the tantric path worships the Mother Goddess while the Vedic path rejects her.

In an article called “Vedic Light and Tantric Energy Yogas” posted by the American Institute of Vedic Studies, the following points are among those made to showcase the similarities between the two movements, which it points out after stating the differences.

VEDIC	TANTRA	SIMILARITIES
Emphasizes light	Emphasizes energy	Both about consciousness
Deities powers of nature	Deities human-like	Vedic deities also personalized over time and tantric associated with natural themes
Emphasizes Shiva principles and other male deities	Emphasizes Shakti and Shiva	Vedic embraces Mother Goddess as underlying Vedic scripture and tantra mates Shakti with Shiva
Reflects metrical power of Sanskrit	Reflects power of Sanskrit seed sounds in chakras	Both embrace rhythms of cosmos

Other similarities abound. For instance, tantric teachings employ Vedic mantras and honor Vedic deities within the practitioner, including Agni (fire), Soma (moon), Vayu (wind), and Surya (sun). In Vedic tradition these four great *devatas* (principles of light) are both inner and outer forms of light in the universe but are deified. In tantra they are packaged as goddesses and then related to different chakras as energies. Both Vedic and tantric yoga, however, teach practitioners how to awaken these four lights and four energies in the body through the chakras. The left-handed path of tantra is usually considered separate, if not abhorred, by the purist Vedic practitioners; however, Vedic practices—including ritual use of intoxicants, meat, or sacred sex, as well as rituals and mantras for gaining wealth, fertility, and victory over enemies—are very similar to the left-handed tantric use of fire rituals, mantras, and sexuality. [22]

Perhaps what's most important is to know that both paths seek to energize us so we can reflect the light of the Divine. In this there is oneness between the disciplines and among ourselves.

A Sketch of Yoga

We have referenced yoga dozens of times in the last few chapters. It's time to paint a broader picture of yoga and how it developed, pulling together the thoughts we are sprinkling throughout this section of the book.

Yoga could be said to have begun with the dawn of time, alongside (and within) tantra and the Vedic scriptures. It most likely emerged about five thousand to seven thousand years ago in the Indus civilization, if not before.

No matter the yoga practice, yoga as a discipline of spiritual study implores us to ask these essential questions of ourselves:

Who am I?

Where do I come from?

Where am I going?

It is these three questions that yoga, meaning "yoke," compels us to investigate through the following developmental time capsules:

Vedic Yoga: (archaic times to 500 BCE) As can be understood through the Vedas, yoga was connected with the ritual of life. Called "archaic yoga," the Vedic version centered on sacrifice as the means for adjoining the material and spiritual worlds. Practitioners learned to focus for long periods of time in order to transcend the limitations of the ordinary mind. The reward would be a vision or experience of the greater reality. The Vedic hymns sing praises of the intuitive gifts of these early practitioners.

Pre-Classical Yoga: (500 BCE to second century CE) First linked with the Brahmanas and Aranyakas of the Vedic texts, yoga matured through the Upanishads and was further defined with the appearance of Gautama the Buddha in the fifth century BCE and through tantric practices. In fact, of the two hundred Upanishads, only a handful were composed before the appearance of Gautama the Buddha.

One of the key yoga texts is the Bhagavad Gita. This and other important pre-classical texts charge us with opposing evil through right action and moving beyond our ego. Pre-classical yoga is the origin of many schools of yoga, and most of their tenets are found in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, epics in which the Bhagavad Gita is embedded.[23]

Two basic types of yoga emerged at this time: Karma yoga, the path of right action; and Jnana yoga, the path of knowledge or study of scriptures.[24]

As yoga moved into Buddhism, we find Buddhist scriptures morphing to accommodate it, embracing meditation, physical activities, and tantric practices.[25]

Classical Yoga: (second century CE onward) Classical yoga applies to the eightfold path introduced in the second century CE in the *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali. Overall, it is dualistic, expressing that we are made of matter and spirit. The goal of classical yoga practices is to restore purity to the spirit through a dualistic approach, in which consciousness and matter are considered two different realities.[26]

One of the classical yoga practices is kriya yoga, called the path of transmutive action. This name emphasizes the internal activities that enable a practitioner to change into a higher form. This highly self-focused yoga encourages the erasing of *samskara,* or subliminal activators from the subconscious.[27]

Postclassical Yoga: (second century CE practices until recent times, diverging from Patanjali) Great adepts now began to probe the potential of the body. Earlier yogis and yoginis were more interested in leaving the body in order to merge with Spirit. An emerging interest in alchemy formulated a system of practices aimed at rejuvenating the body and encouraging longevity. The body is now a temple of the spirit, not a slipper to be discarded. Yogins developed practices that could alter the body's biochemistry. This stage led to Hatha yoga and tantra yoga.[28]

Hatha Yoga: This yoga, which offered up the physical postures used by many current Western yogins, appeared in the ninth or tenth centuries CE. It was seen as quite heretical in that it focused on physicality and magical powers. It also incorporated elements of Buddhism, alchemy, and Shaivism.

A tantric tradition, Hatha yoga embraced the idea that perceiving the world in terms of polarities created suffering, delusion, and pain. The word *hatha* breaks down into the terms *ha,* or "sun," and *that,* or "joining together." It is therefore about accessing one's strength and discipline to conjoin the duality of body and mind.

A transformed body was more immune to disease, open to enlightenment, and could also become a channel for magical abilities. The use of the chakras was a critical component of achieving this transformation.

Tantra Yoga: Tantra yoga emerged around the fourth century CE and flowered in the tenth century CE. Rejecting the Vedas as unnecessary, it rejected the idea that liberation required rigorous ascetic maneuvers and meditation, as well as any thoughts of renouncing the world. It also emphasized the body as a source of enlightenment rather than the karmic yoga concept of the body as a manifestation of karma and suffering. Instead, through tantra yoga, an initiate focuses on devotion to the goddess, or *bhakti*.

Tantric yogis mirror the tantric belief that human suffering comes from the separation of opposites. Growth results from uniting our dualistic selves. Celebrating the physical body was part of this process.

This path didn't completely break with Vedic tradition. Instead, a yogi adheres to the *yamas* (ethical standards) and *niyamas* (moral disciplines), as well as the asanas and pranayamas outlined in the *Yoga Sutra*. Tantric yoga adepts also learn how to concentrate on a single point (the icon of a deity), gain visual insights, and employ mantras corresponding to a place in the body, including the chakras.[29]

Modern Yoga: (1893 to present) Imagine a meeting of all religious traditions—a gathering devoted to harmony. This was the goal of the first Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Appearing was Swami Vivekananda, a wandering Hindu monk and adept of Jnana

yoga, the yoga of discernment. Vivekananda made such an impression there that he began traveling widely to teach yoga and the Vedanta.

Vivekananda was one of the early yoga gurus in the West. Numerous others followed, including Paramahansa Yogananda, who established the Self-Realization Fellowship in 1925 in Los Angeles. Yogendra Mastamani then astonished Americans with the power of Hatha yoga in 1919, founding a branch of yoga called Kaivalyadhama, which is devoted to the scientific study of yoga.

Yet other key early American teachers include Jiddu Krishnamurti, who died in 1986, but not before demonstrating the power of Jnana yoga. Russian-born yogini Indra Devi opened a Hatha yoga studio in Hollywood in 1947, teaching stars including Gloria Swanson.

In 1965 sixty-nine-year-old Shrila Prabhupada arrived in New York and founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and spurred the movement of Bhakti yoga, while Himalayan master Swami Sivananda also began training Bhakti swamis in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1969 Yogi Bhajan began teaching kundalini yoga to his traditional Sikh community, and in 1970 through the 1980s, Bhagavan Rajneesh (now known as Osho) made headlines for leading sexual orgies. Other important teachers included Sri Aurobindo, the father of Integral yoga; Ramana Maharshi of Jnana yoga, Papa Ramdas, who taught Mantra yoga, and Swami Nityananda, a miracle worker in the Siddha yoga tradition. His disciple, Swami Muktananda, put a tantric version of Siddha yoga on the map.

Hatha yoga was furthered by Sri Krishnamacharya, and one of his students was B. K. S. Iyengar, who formed his own brand of teaching the physical postures. Other well-known contemporary yoga masters from India include Sri Chinmoy and Swami Satyananda, a tantric master who has created the Bihar school of yoga.

One exceptional woman yoga teacher is Meera Ma or Mother Meera, still alive in 2014, who doesn't teach yoga by speaking. Rather, she communicates in silence before thousands of people a year.[30]

Our journey into the heart of tantra and yoga has brought us from the dawn of chakra medicine into a complexity of practices, ideals, and concepts. If anything, what has emerged are the underpinnings for the multitudes of chakra processes from which we can choose to suit our own unique journey.

Before further examining the incredible variety of chakra-based systems, it will serve us well to shift direction, moving from history and spirit into science and energy. After all, whether supporting an orthodox, tantric, yogic, or personally colorful spiritual path, chakras are physical and physiological as well. This fact invites your entrance into part 5, which focuses on the science of all things chakra.

[contents]

PART 5

The Science of Subtle Energy

> THE NITROGEN IN our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, the carbon in our apple pies were made in the interiors of collapsing stars. We are made of starstuff.
>
> CARL SAGAN

From a scientific perspective, we are made of stardust. From a metaphysical viewpoint, our chakras are the lenses through which we sense, see, and feel the world—and our souls. Substitute the word "energy" for "starstuff" and you are oriented to the nature of the subtle body, centered in the light of creation.

It's not quite fair that we romanticize the fire of the stars and make commonplace the idea of energy. We respect energy: we demand it from our coffee, relationships, and workouts. Yet few of us really understand the magic and marvel of energy and its role in chakra medicine—and changing that is the aim of this section.

Just as rhythm is the essence of the heart, so is energy the quintessence of the chakras and other energetic structures. To address the elusive nature of energy, I will introduce you to two forms of it—physical and subtle—demonstrating that each is governed by a different set of laws.

For the most part, the physical universe is explained by classical physics, a body of knowledge originating with famous greats including Sir Isaac Newton. I tip my hat to Newton—a hat that will hopefully protect me from

wayward falling apples—by calling this version of natural law "apple physics."

Subtle energy is best understood through the lens of quantum physics, sometimes called "spooky physics" because it bends our understanding of natural law so far that it sometimes seems to break it. Paying tribute to the old notion of apples versus oranges, I call this scientific approach "orange physics."

Chakras are physical organs in the sense that they are anchored in the body and interact with it. Therefore, though they are members of a family of energetic structures including other energy bodies, subtle channels, and energetic fields, an understanding of chakras must include a thorough acknowledgment of Newtonian law and physiology. But chakras are also luminous energy bodies dwelling within and around us like a shining field of stars, so they are best understood by developing some familiarity with orange physics.

To help you comprehend the science of all things chakra, I will introduce some of the "stars" that have contributed to this knowledge. Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and other well-known scientists are featured center stage, but I will also cover lesser-known but equally vibrant minds, from William Reich and Nikola Tesla to researchers Grant McFetridge and Kim Bonghan. I sometimes think of this array of historical and contemporary theorists as reminiscent of Russian nesting dolls, those brightly painted wooden figures that build in size from smallest to largest, with each successive doll enfolding the one before it. Just so, the scientific knowledge explaining, surrounding, and illuminating the chakras is built layer by layer as thinking evolves. In the evolution of the science are echoes of the scriptural bases of chakras and chakra medicine that you explored in part 4. Both have progressed on a trajectory of deepening and widening knowledge, and both are being ever renewed.

You might be surprised by the in-depth nature of this scientific odyssey, which seeks to explain not only the science but also the structure of the chakras. On the side of apple physics you will find discussions of

neurotransmitters, hormones, the central nervous system, photons, fields, and even embryonic development. Even from a spiritual point of view, chakras have been considered psychophysiological organs. This means that a thorough look at physiological systems is essential for a well-rounded understanding of what chakras influence and what influences them. On the orange side, it's equally important to comprehend concepts such as quarks and entanglement, electromagnetic fields and frequency. It's also imperative to show that while they are distinct, these apples and oranges get along, as the activities of our chakras marry these two approaches to reality.

One of the ways we can unite the two is through a thorough scientific analysis of kundalini, the animating force of the subtle—and perhaps even physical—energetic structure. How might science explain Kundalini Shakti's climb through the chakras to join her cosmic mate, the great god Shiva? The complexity of this holy mission is astonishing and fascinating.

As you peruse the science of the chakras, remember that no matter how detailed the explorations and explanations, in the end the celestial qualities of the chakras are predominant. When we look at the orbs in the sky, we care more about how they affect our ability to dream than the nitrogen content in our bodies. Any good scientist is a poet, and it is the poetry of the chakras we must remember above all.

[contents]

Your Energy Primer

UNDERSTANDING PHYSICAL AND SUBTLE ENERGY (AND A FEW MATTERS IN BETWEEN)

I WOULD LIKE to substitute the word
vibrations in the place of electricity.
Vibrations incorporate the aspects of color,
light, sound, and all frequencies in the
electromagnetic spectrum.

STEVEN ROSS

How can we understand a thing separate from what makes the thing work? Applying this question to our aim of comprehending the essence of the chakra, how can we comprehend its nature unless we understand the substance that makes it function? Truly, we can't, so in this chapter we will consider the fundamental nature of the chakra by engaging in a rousing discussion of the nature of energy.

Everything consists of energy, and that energy is at work everywhere we look explains many obvious aspects of physical reality, but it also illuminates the realm of chakras and all other subtle structures. As we first discussed in part 1, there are many definitions of and kinds of energy, and we will visit some of them in this chapter. But it's important to know that this is an ever-moving target. Modern science is continually developing new data, and it sometimes reaches profound new conclusions about energy, updating our perceptions of the world and of ourselves. Exploring energy is truly a grand human adventure.

This chapter's journey begins by introducing a generalized definition of energy, one that can suit both physical and subtle perspectives. Our next destination will be apple physics, with a bow to classical Newtonian science. Next we'll travel to the land of orange, or quantum, physics. A meaningful discussion of energy has to acknowledge that the two paths can be so dissimilar that the analogy of apples and oranges applies. The lines are also blurred between these two approaches to reality, but we'll connect a few dots between the two, all toward the purpose of getting a working understanding of subtle energy. One of the main theories featured along the way will be the view of contemporary thinker Dr. Michael Scroggins, whose ideas, when considered from a practical point of view, place us at the frontier of enabling great change in medicine and science.

But, of course, there are many layers of immeasurable energy as well, and spiritual exploration is often the main source of our knowledge of these. We'll briefly identify a few of the levels of reality that have emerged from the work of the mental giants whose shoulders we stand upon, as well as those contemporary scientists who bend over test tubes and computer screens. In all matters we will invite scientific discussions rooted in the past that could usher us into the future, and then we will more deeply explore the science and structure of chakras, energetic anatomy, and kundalini.

You can draw upon the knowledge reflected in this chapter throughout the rest of your voyage through this part, and I invite you to return to it just as a traveler does a guidebook; energy theory is wide ranging and complex, so reviewing the fundamentals can be very useful. And if you are so inclined, you can also write in the margins and even add additional pages of your own, furthering your discovery of this all-important subject.

Critical Definitions

Because the science of energy is complex, in this chapter you will find that I refer to many of its important concepts before more formally introducing you to them. So to help orient you early on, following are definitions of some key terms:

Antiparticle/Antimatter: Every particle that has mass has an antiparticle, one with the same mass but an opposite charge and with equal spin, magnitude, and life span. The antiparticle of an electron is a positively charged antielectron or positron; that of a proton, an antiproton; that of a neutron, an antineutron. Particles and antiparticles can annihilate each other and produce photons.

Atom: A fundamental piece of matter, which we might define as anything that can be touched. Atoms join together to form molecules. An atom cannot be broken down any further using chemical means, yet it is composed of subatomic particles or fields, both measurable and quantum. Its measurable components are protons, neutrons, and electrons.

Color: Electromagnetic waves vibrating at varying frequencies in the visible spectrum.

Electrical Field: A region of space characterized by a force generated by an electric charge.

Electricity: The flow of moving electrons.

Electromagnetic Field (EMF): A field that has both magnetic and electrical properties and surrounds objects with an electrical charge. It also interacts with charged objects within the field.

Electromagnetic Radiation: The self-propagating blend of an electrical and magnetic field.

Electromagnetic Spectrum: All the wavelengths of light; the range of all types of electromagnetic radiation.

Electron: A subatomic particle that carries a negative charge; the primary carrier of electricity in solids.

Energy: The force required to create movement; in this chapter energy is defined as information that moves.

Field: A function that assigns a value to every point in space. This means that there is a force exerted in every area occupied by a certain field. Fields also exist where two bodies—such as objects, planets, or people—are separated but exert a force against each other. Typically these values or measurements of force/exertion remain continuous over distance, except in the case of light, which involves the excitation of electromagnetic fields. The areas within an electromagnetic field fluctuate rapidly.

Force: The push or pull on an object that occurs in interaction between objects.

Frequency: The repetition rate of a periodic vibration per unit of time—the numbers of waves that pass by a point in one second. It is often expressed as hertz (Hz) or cycles per second.

Light: A wave of alternating electrical and magnetic fields. Important properties are frequency and wavelength. The two attributes are inversely related: the higher the frequency, the shorter the wavelength, and vice versa.

Magnetic Field: A field produced by moving electrical charges or a magnet and the quantum movement or spin of elementary particles.

Matter: Anything that can be touched and that has mass or weight. Everything in the universe except energy is made of matter.

Medium: The substance or material that carries a wave. It is not the wave; it merely carries it.

Molecule: Two or more atoms formed together chemically; the smallest unit of a chemical compound that can participate in a chemical reaction.

Neutron: A subatomic particle found in the nucleus of an atom. It holds no charge.

Nucleus: The center of an atom. It contains the protons and neutrons of the atom and is surrounded by a cloud of negatively charged electrons.

Particle: A small, localized object that carries several properties, including volume or mass. One current theory is that particles and the forces between them are merely quantum excitations, or movements of fields.

Photon: The fundamental unit of light, it has both wave and particle properties. It carries a charge and has no mass.

Proton: A subatomic particle found in the nucleus of an atom. It is positively charged.

Quantum (Plural Is Quanta): The smallest amount of a physical property, such as the smallest amount of energy something can possess.

Vacuum: A space containing very little matter.

Vibration: Movement. An oscillation or repetitive motion around an equilibrium position.

Wave: A periodic disturbance that moves through a medium from one location to another. Waves transport energy, not matter. When a wave is moving—when there is a disturbance in a medium—particles shift temporarily from their rest position. They return to home base after the wave has passed. For example, waves move on the ocean, but the water remains in the ocean when the wave has passed.

Wavelength: The distance from the peak of one wave to the peak of the next.

A Primer on Energy: Toward a Working Definition

The simplest and most widely accepted definition of energy is a force that accomplishes work. This idea gets us out of the gate, and it could also apply (literally) to a horse getting ready for the races.

However, for the purposes of this book, I would like to return to the definition of energy I offered earlier: information that moves. As Paul Pearsall explains in his book *The Heart's Code*, research has determined that information and energy are one and the same.[1] Everything that exists has

energy, which is full of information, and it is information that tells energy how to organize. Even the mind/consciousness is a manifestation of information-containing energy.[2]

In our quest to understand the chakras, the implication is that everything contains and emanates instructional and intentional information. Chakras respond to the information that is present in physical and subtle energies, and they can also store this information, which makes them powerful instruments for change.

Energy (information) is not a stagnant thing; in fact, the opposite is true. Vibration is the other half of our formula for energy. Science now knows that absolutely everything—a subatomic particle, a cupcake, a kid—continually vibrates, or moves. This activity creates waves or frequencies that are unique to what is moving. Every being or object is composed of its own fundamental frequencies, which means that everything consistently dances to its own tune. Simplistically, we now understand why our friends the chakras are each a different color and vibration and serve unique functions. They are composed of distinct bands of interrelated information and vibration.

French physicist Louis de Broglie proved decades ago that all matter is composed of waves, which are always in motion. Albert Einstein then proved that even photons—the basic units of light, which are both particles and waves and have no mass—are energy and therefore vibrate; in fact, their momentum is entirely dependent on frequency.[3] Hence energy is information in constant motion. Another way to say this is that it is *informed vibration*.

Scientifically, vibration is defined as a back-and-forth or up-and-down movement, or, more formally, a continuing period of oscillation relative to a fixed point. In other words, a vibration is one full oscillation. Oscillation is the basis of frequency, the periodic speed at which something vibrates. It is most frequently measured in hertz (Hz) or cycles per second, although frequency can also be measured by the number of wave motions in a given amount of time.[4]

Our five senses are instruments for translating these mysterious vibrations so we can figure them out. Our chakras, however, because they sense very

subtle frequencies, can pick up on more than our five senses can. For instance, imagine a friend is thinking negatively about you. You can't hear this with your ears, but your fifth chakra, which relates to communication, picks up on it. You might respond by feeling sick, even if you don't know why. Now imagine that your friend is thinking positively about you. You might feel inexplicably happy.

Vibration may be even more important than we have guessed. Leading-edge biophysicists are revealing that vibrating frequencies control everything about us, even our bodily health—down to the function of our molecules. One researcher, Dr. Colin W. F. McClare, an Oxford University biophysicist, has discovered that the frequencies emitted by vibrating energy are almost a hundred times more efficient in sending information through a body than are physical signals such as hormones, neurotransmitters, and chemicals.[5]

How do we traverse from this discussion to a fuller explanation of chakras? Well, we have to take two approaches to create a valid picture, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. One approach is through the classical "apple" physics of Sir Isaac Newton and others. Hundreds of years ago, Newton initiated an explanation of weighted physical objects and their properties. Classical physics attempts to explain the universe from a macro perspective, describing how large bodies such as planets and stars operate. It relates to the level of reality that can be quantified, sifted, and weighed, but our working definition of energy still fits. Energy with mass or physicality is still information in continual movement. As we'll discover in part 5, contemporary research has been measuring chakras and their kin, fields and meridians, revealing chakras as Newton-approved.

The other approach, "orange" physics—the study of very small or quantum bodies that are much less measurable—composes the second pathway. But both studies relate to the workings of energy.

Our apple definition of energy applies to both physical and subtle energy. Subtle energy is usually defined most simply as energy that can't be measured. This broad-strokes definition does little justice to subtle or other immeasurable energies, however, because it fails to impress us with the fact

that there are energies that have no mass and therefore can't be weighed. Usually this is just called "energy," but as you will learn in our discussion of Dr. Michael Scroggins's theories, we should emphasize the frequency nature of subtle energy rather than worrying about its weight or lack thereof. Frequency doesn't require mass, yet it can carry information and move. In fact, we could say that first comes energy (i.e., subtle energies) and then comes mass. As physicist Max Planck once said, "All the physical matters are composed of vibration."[6]

What is the nature of orange physics? In entering orange country we trek into the land of quantum physics, which deals with the micro-universe. Here we study quanta, the smallest packets of energy, which stir up trouble in classical physics because they are difficult to pinpoint or measure. In fact, as we shall see, they only exist when they are being measured. When we get to the subatomic level, consisting primarily of quanta, we do not find matter at all; rather, we find pure energy—which is potential but not "real" matter—much of the time. Pure energy has a field around it. The more vibrating energy is compressed into this field of energy, the more intense is the vibration within that field, until it finally turns into matter. Some call this a unified field or the subtle matrix.[7] It's in the quantum land we find chakras most comfortable, for they display the near-magical qualities of this emerging science.

There are several other factors involved in analyzing energy, whether physical or subtle. We will consider many of them in this chapter, including the role of an observer, speed, and more. But a further dive into the subject should begin with the basics: the seeds of physics, or the apple universe.

The Apple Universe: Classical Physics

Until relatively recently, most Western scientists held an extremely practical view of reality, reminiscent of the phrase "what you see is what you get."

Within the confines of the apple universe, your coffee remains in the cup until you drink it—or spill it. The sky is above and the ground below and you walk between the two, a lightning rod for experience and inspiration. Within

this materialistic view of reality, energy is controlled and defined by natural laws that tell it where, what, and how to be, and certainly when to be. This landscape explains how and why we can say that chakras manage body parts, emotion-based chemical reactions, and parts of our everyday reality.

This way of thinking about the world is largely attributed to Sir Isaac Newton, who died in the early 1700s. Of course, many schoolchildren are less concerned with Newton's scientific and mathematic discoveries than they are enthralled with his association with apples. As one story goes, Newton was sitting under an apple tree when, *plop*—he was hit in the head with a fallen fruit. Rather than rush to make a pie, he pondered what had happened. He figured out that there must be a force that accelerated the apple in its fall, thereby introducing the world to a fundamental knowledge of gravity and other universal principles.

As we peel the apple universe to the core, we should bear in mind that although most of its ideas are physically based—and in this book we are investigating more subtle realms—a chakra, like all other energetic structures, incorporates the tangible, dwells within the ethereal, and intersects with the heavenly. This means it is as important for our discussion of chakras to understand the natural world as it is the more mystical spheres.

Level One: Fundamental Concepts

Let's examine the basics of this branch of physics.

In it, the essential units of the universe are particles and waves. There are particles in liquids, solids, and gases, always vibrating in different directions and at different speeds and with a variety of intensities. Particles communicate with each other by transferring energy.

Picturing waves as the continually oscillating waters of the sea is a good start, but there are several other ways to conceptualize them. Technically a wave is a disturbance in a medium through which energy is transferred from one particle inside that medium to another. In this scenario the medium doesn't change. A wave can also be a snapshot of this disturbance over time or a single cycle that represents this disturbance.

Waves function under what is called the law of superpositioning. This principle states that when two or more equal waves are traveling through a medium at the same time, they will pass through each other without being disturbed. The resulting or "net" displacement is the sum of the two individual displacements. Displacement means that a new energy is taking up the space previously occupied by another.[8]

Joining waves and particles are fields. Succinctly, a field is a physical quantity that exerts the same influence at each point in space and time. Fields are also called forces, as they move through a medium and transfer energy. In the Newtonian world a field extends throughout all of space, even though on a practical level it weakens with distance until it's virtually undetectable. In a nutshell, there are classical and quantum fields; the main difference is that classical fields, which include gravitational fields, are typically studied with regard to how large bodies such as planets operate in the universe. There are many types of classical fields linked to subtle energy, including scalar, vector, spinor, and tensor fields, all of which I will briefly describe later. Quantum fields exist in superposition states and are examined in terms of the minute affairs of the universe—for example, how particles become excited and turn into fields or become a part of a field.

Waves can form fields, but a field can also bounce into an atom and cause the atom to make its own waves and fields. Atoms are the smallest particles in an element; they combine to make molecules. As soon as the first wave stirs up trouble with an atom, it becomes altered. Waves now combine in a process called superimposing, which occurs when one wave is added to another and a completely different third wave is formed. This result is called constructive because something is being created. Waves can also cancel each other out, however, which results in a destructive outcome.[9]

Even though we've been talking about particles as physical objects, many contemporary scientists believe that there is no such thing. Caltech theoretical physicist Sean Carroll asserts that a particle is actually a field: as fields vibrate against each other, particles spring forth; these can transfer energy to adjacent fields.[10]

This concept is important because it helps us stop thinking of the universe as a connect-the-dots design. Fields can penetrate space-time, the continuum of space (location) and time (sequence of events). Many scientists believe that rather than being fixed, space-time responds to deeper levels of reality, or that fields inform immeasurable (subtle) energies that in turn affect measurable (physical) energies. The results of these interactions are seen in the wild and confounding activities related to chakra medicine such as time bending, ESP, and distance healing.[11] It also explains why our ancestors continually placed many of the chakras in the body, and yet, as we'll see in our examinations of chakras around the world, linked them to everything from planets to enlightenment. Composed of particles that are actually extending waves and fields, chakras stretch through space-time, serving us on every level.

Level Two: The "Charge" of Relationships

What develops from (and underlies) the basics of physical reality—the particles, waves, and fields composing Newton's universe? Relationships.

Physical reality is largely forged from particles, waves, and fields—maybe mainly the latter. It forms coffee cups and chocolate cakes based on what happens inside these components, through interactions between them, and because of what is created with them. To understand these relationships we must take the top off an atom and look inside.

The largest and most observable parts of atoms are protons, neutrons, and electrons. These subatomic particles (subatomic meaning smaller than an atom) have weight or mass. Protons and electrons are attracted to each other, which enables both to carry a charge. A charge is a force inside a particle, and there are negative and positive forces—a proton has a positive force and an electron has a negative one. Neutrons are neutral, so they have no force.

Charge is a vital concept in energetics, as it can create electricity, technically defined as the flow of electrical power or charge. Our bodies are electrical generators, as is kundalini, which will become clear in chapter 22. Moreover, electricity is a vital aspect of the subtle realm. As you will soon

learn, many esoteric scientists believe that subtle energy is nothing more or less than well-disguised electrical charges that operate at such high or low levels that we can't measure or track them with the equipment we have developed to date. One of the reasons that we emphasize the seven in-body Hindu chakras—and why so many cultures perceive these vehicles—is that they are plugged into the spine and brain, our electrically charged central nervous system. All of life—like the chakras—comes down to electricity, or charge.

Charge connects two or more particles and creates bonding while that charge exists. Because an electrical charge can only exist when a particle is attracted to an oppositely charged mate, we find shades of Traditional Chinese Medicine and other energetic modalities that hinge on the foundational belief that balance is dependent on opposites connecting. The ancient Hindu mind also knew that within the core of every chakra dwells equally powerful negative (feminine) and positive (masculine) gods, each of which depicts spiritual traits. In the apple world the neutral particles don't have charge, so they cannot attract other particles—there is no Electricitymatch .com. This means they can't produce electricity.

How is electrical charge actually generated? The main players are the electrons. The smallest members of the three-part atomic team, electrons spin around the atoms in shell formations, orbiting the nucleus, or center, of the atom. Usually, electrons stay close to home, homesick at the thought of abandoning the protons and neutrons that live in the nucleus. This means that the inner shells hold the most electrons. The electrons farthest away from center can be tempted to "cut loose" and jump to different atoms.

What prompts an electron to make such a leap? Electrons are stimulated into motion by an electrical field generated by a difference in electrical charge. Pushed by the force, the charged particles—which, remember, might actually be fields—can skip around like pebbles tossed into the sea, from wave to wave or atom to atom.

Electrical flow formulates magnetic fields, another important aspect of subtle energy, and there are a variety of interconnections between electricity

and magnetism to consider. Magnetic fields are generated by the spin of electrons around an atom's nucleus. Another activity that can generate a magnetic field includes the conduction of electricity through a wire. In addition, electricity causes magnetism, and magnets can also make electricity. Moving magnetic fields can also stimulate electrons, which can generate electricity.

Every single cell in the body generates electricity and so produces magnetic fields. Many of the energetic fields accessed and manipulated through chakra medicine are magnetic, a type of field that is considered protective and, according to certain researchers, is linked with thought and even ESP.[12] They can also produce electrical fields and, even more importantly, electromagnetic fields. As will become clear throughout part 5, chakras are essentially electromagnetic fields—another term for "light."

Level Three: Light and Sound

Think of how you negotiate your daily life. You hear the coffee percolating as the morning sun streams into the room. You select your clothes based on color. As you head out for the day, you listen for the affirmation that your car engine is starting. Onward we journey into the good world, making decisions based on two main factors: light and sound. Energy in the apple world couldn't get more fundamental than these two factors.

Let There Be Light

What do electrons produce when shifting from one shell to another but radiant or electromagnetic energy, also called light?

Subtle structures are composed of spectrums of light, and chakras operate on and as bands or frequencies of light. The surrounding auric fields are layers of light, and the nadis and meridians are channels for light, which we will explore further in subsequent chapters. The truth is that the physical body also functions because of (and communicates via) light, which at the simplest level can be thought of as a form of electricity.

To establish a baseline, light is produced by oscillating disturbances, or electromagnetic waves, in the electromagnetic field (EMF). The

electromagnetic spectrum features arrays of light that oscillate at different frequencies. EMFs are formed from interweaving electrical and magnetic fields but are technically defined as fields that assert a force on particles that have electrical charge. As Illustration 51 in chapter 21 shows, visible light is only a small section of the electromagnetic spectrum. Chakras reflect the equivalent to the visible light but at levels we don't know how to measure yet.

We can paint a visual explanation by adding our principles of wave action that were shared in the beginning of this chapter. Wavelength and frequency have an inverse relationship. Think of a series of ripples fanning out when a pebble is dropped into a still pond. It creates what is essentially a series of radiating waves, each with a peak and a valley. The longer the distance between ripples, the fewer times a complete wave will pass a given point in the pond (the waves will pass less frequently); the shorter the distance between ripples, the more frequently peaks and valleys pass that point in space. Radiation that has longer wavelengths and travels at lower frequencies than visible light includes infrared, microwave, and radio radiation. Radiation with shorter wavelengths and higher frequencies than visible light includes ultraviolet, X-ray, and gamma rays.

The core unit of light is the photon, a subatomic particle that is both a wave and a particle. Unlike other elementary particles such as the proton or electron, photons are usually said to hold no mass or weight, carry no electrical charge, and won't decay in empty space. These seemingly impervious particles can also travel in a vacuum at the speed of light.

In high school I was taught that a vacuum—the lowest ground state of all fields in space—is empty; now we know it isn't so. A vacuum might not have mass, but it does hold energy, and, as we shall see later in this chapter, it plays an essential role in the operation of subtle energy.

One of many quanta, photons are formed when a charge is accelerated and a molecule, atom, or nucleus shifts to a lower energy level, such as when an electron moves between shells and when a particle and its antiparticle are

annihilated. They are basically the most visible component of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Inhabiting a body electric means that we live within a body of light. One of the ways in which electricity is conducted through the body in such a way as to produce light is via ions: atoms or groups of atoms that have altered their electric charge by gaining or losing an electron. In turn, ions carry messages across bodily systems, such as the nervous system. Usually composed of minerals such as calcium, magnesium, or potassium, ions convey information in electrical charges.

Ionization is the word used to describe the shifting of electrons from one atomic shell to another. This movement can force an electron right out of its atom, as I've already described, but it can also affect a molecule. When this happens, a neutral molecule becomes a positive ion. If the errant electron attaches to a neutral molecule, one without charge, it becomes a negative ion. If it attaches to a positive ion, it stays in one of the vacant shells and emits a photon—or light.[13] In other words, our bodies can actually emanate light using processes including the one described above called ionizing radiation.[14]

Since 1974, researchers including Fritz-Albert Popp have been proving that the body is a field of light. Modern methods have shown that the human body emits relatively high-intensity radiation and extremely low-intensity light radiation, the latter on the order of a few hundred photons per second per square centimeter of surface area.[15] The presence of biophotons is emphasized: the quantum designations of photons that are emitted by biological systems or living tissue. Biophotons are low-level visible light emissions. Studies have shown that these bodily emissions are sensitive to environmental changes and also help regulate our reactions to the environment. This is not ordinary light as we commonly think of it; it is coherent, laser-like light in which two or more waves relate in the same phase and at the same frequency. This is the "ideal" state of waves. However, our body's light is much more coherent than even laser light. All biophotons resonate together, much like instruments in an orchestra. Likewise, there is a

biophoton field around a living being and even emanating from its DNA, which stores the same light in the nuclei.[16]

One of the amazing consequences of this biophoton bathing is that it reinforces the very chakra medicine idea that we exist in a state of interconnectivity. Proof positive of this statement is encapsulated in an experiment conducted in the 1990s by cell biologist Glen Rein; these experiments were summarized by Institute of HeartMath research director Rollin McCraty in a paper published in 2003. In the study, participants held a DNA sample in a test tube in their hands. Some of the participants were trained in HeartMath techniques, which enable one to entrain the body to positive emotions, especially entraining the heart. The individuals already capable of generating the highest ratios of heart coherence—marked by the ability to perform such activities as creating more ordered heart rhythms—were frequently able to alter the conformation of the DNA, including folding or unfolding the helixes. Nonlocal studies that separated the DNA and the participants showed that because of the interconnectivity of EMFs, some participants could still affect the DNA. In fact, one individual was half a mile away and was able to increase the winding of DNA.[17]

The analysis of light is also important to our "chakra medicine cause" in that it shows that light is malleable: it can be converted into other forms of energy.[18]

This is one of the many reasons why some scientists who explore subtle energy theorize that the biophoton field around living beings might mediate subtle energies, helping us process energies we can't currently measure but only observe through effect. In fact, spend a moment visualizing a chakra in light (pun intended) of the knowledge of self as being made of light. Picture your spine as a highway of billions of units of light, each emanating waves. Concentrate on the distinctly denser points of light at the nerve plexuses that constitute the chakras. Now watch as these swallow bits of light—waves of color—attracted to them. Within the colorful reservoir each chakra simultaneously radiates small and great streams both into and beyond the body. These waves meet and collaborate with external emanations—and, in

fact, prove that chakras help connect everything and everyone in an extension of goodness.

The Sound Of An Apple Falling

Subtle structures equate with light and also sound. Mechanical energy occurs when a force acts upon a mass. In Newtonian terms, sound is a mechanical energy. Sound is the measure of vibrations on the move, whether they occur because of two hands clapping—or an apple falling, or a chakra interacting with any other part of your being.

Sound consists of waves that travel through the air. The shorter the wavelength and higher the frequency of the wave, the higher the resulting pitch of the sound. The longer the wavelength and lower the frequency of the wave, the lower the pitch. When you add the amplitude of the wave to the equation—the vertical distance between the bottom of one wave and the top of the next—you have the volume of the sound; the greater the distance, the louder the sound, and, conversely, the smaller the distance, the softer the sound.

Frequency is measured in hertz (Hz) or the number of sound waves cycling per second, while loudness (the amplitude of the sound waves) is measured in decibels (dB). In other words, hertz measures the frequency of a sound and decibels measure the loudness of the sound. To give you an idea of the range of these, a whisper is about 20 dB while a firecracker is about 140 dB. Thunder travels at between 20 and 80 Hz, and talking occurs between 250 and 6,000 Hz.[19] We can only hear frequencies between 20 and 20,000 Hz, and sounds louder than 120 dB can injure our ears. In chapter 21 you'll discover how many hertz or decibels the various chakras emit, all outside the range that our ears can perceive. You'll also discover that chakras are able to pick up on and direct sounds we don't even pay attention to.

Atomic units such as electrons, photons, and neutrons move at their own speeds. Together they create a combined oscillation or vibration related to the atom, or a field. Motion also creates pressure, which in turn creates waves. A single atom can generate many waves or fields, and because the fields are

constantly shifting, the atom is continually moving. This movement produces sounds in the form of sonic waves.

As the changes in pressure alter the sound waves, the pitch changes. And even though atoms like to vibrate in the same range, analogous to all the altos or all the sopranos in a choir, invading waves—say, an out-of-tune tenor—can change the sound wave's function and tone.

Every object or group of objects, from an atom to a single organ like the liver to an entire bodily system, generates its own unique wave structures, or fields. These fields can be light fields or sound fields.[20]

Contemporary research has recorded the sounds that yeast cells make—yes, as it happens, they make a sound. The motion of these cells creates a high-pitched scream too high to be heard with the naked ear but translatable with equipment. And researchers at the University of Manchester in England blasted human prostate cells with infrared light and picked up thousands of resounding and resulting notes. Statistical analysis of these sounds differentiated between normal and cancerous cells. Returning to our musical analogy, healthy cells were the equivalent of in-tune instruments; cancerous cells, out-of-tune tubas.[21] Chakra medicine is often conducted using sound, with specific sounds attuning particular chakras—and, through them, attuning the physical, psychological, and spiritual self.

For instance, I teach students how to use their intuitive faculties to gauge the light or color of a chakra in order to determine its health or needs, and this includes listening to a chakra's sound. In part 3 you learned different evaluations of a chakra's standard sound. In general, I tell students to use their intuitive "ears" or bodily sense to hear or feel if a chakra seems to be "in tune" or "off tune" in relation to themselves or another person. The truth is that every energy system, therefore "song," is different. We truly are unique. If a chakra seems too flat, I believe that chakra is too slow, usually inhibited by past issues or repressed feelings. If it's too sharp, the chakra is too quick and exhibits issues related to anxiety or fear of the future. Working through these challenges—and sending in the healthy tone by toning, singing, or even using the imagination—can rebalance the chakra.

DNA also seems to involve sound, not just light. In fact, researchers at the Wyss Institute at Harvard encoded a 53,400-word book into millions of bits of DNA using a sort of binary code. In other words, the code of sound can be converted into DNA chemicals, with, for example, the letter O being assigned to adenine and the letter I to guanine.[22] The nature of DNA is actually such that current researchers are suggesting it can be reprogrammed with language, sound, and intention.

Leading-edge research into matters of DNA is also being conducted by biophysicist and molecular biologist Pjotr Garjajev and colleagues. One particular set of studies analyzed the effects of our epigenes: the 90 percent of our DNA called "junk DNA." Epigenes store ancestral memories and inherited diseases and actually toggle our functional genes off and on. Bottom line: the Russian researchers have been able to repair genetic defects and make inroads in healing skin cancer—even transforming frog embryos into salamander embryos—by transmitting new patterns into and through the epigenes. One way they have accomplished this goal is by sending spoken words on coherent laser light and radio waves into the DNA. The researchers also discovered that DNA could cause patterns in a vacuum, creating magnetized tunnel or wormhole connections that could transfer information outside of space-time and into a person's consciousness. The implications of Garjajev's findings are that DNA not only transmits and receives information but can also absorb and interpret it.[23]

The work of Dr. Carlo Ventura also focuses on epigenetics, specifically in the area of reviving and reprogramming stem cells. As is featured through the Institute of HeartMath in California, Ventura's work demonstrates the energetic properties of DNA. His research showed that by exposing stem cells to an extremely low-frequency magnetic field with a very low intensity, genes could be triggered to develop and mature. The magnetic field basically altered the memory within a cell. A different type of magnetic field was used to change an adult cell back into a stem cell. Water also played an important role in these conversions in that it signaled nonlocally, or indirectly, to

generate coherent domains or patterns that could transfer the desired knowledge into distant DNA.[24]

All of this research indicates that information isn't only stored in the genes, which we have considered all-powerful programs that dictate our physiology, if not our destiny. It is held within the architecture that is part of the DNA's environment. Information can be transferred through quantum means and nonlocally: in other words, the same way chakra medicine practitioners have always worked, especially in the shamanic traditions, which involve an intuitive person entering a mystical state to connect with alternative realities and invisible beings. (And by "chakra medicine practitioners," I mean those frequently called healers, energy workers, shamans, intuitives, or any other practitioner that interfaces with the subtle energy anatomy or world.)

Not everything that is energetic is beneficial. Living tissue only responds positively to a certain range of light and sound; it can become unhealthy or even be destroyed by exposure to other ranges. For instance, frequencies above 11 Hz create agitation. High-voltage power lines give off 50 to 60 Hz and are of great concern. Extremely low-frequency (ELF) waves can shift consciousness downward and literally dumb people down. Our survival and ability to thrive depend on interacting with a very narrow band of measurable energy.[25] In the end, we need to go back to the fundamental definition of energy: information that moves. It is up to us to decide which information to pay attention to and which to abstain from.

The Sound That Created Life on Earth

Hindu creation stories emphasize the sound that emanated life into being in the universe. *Om* is considered the primal vibration from which everything material has manifested. Every chakra also resonates with its own specific and special tone, or mantra. These sounds are vital instruments in chakra medicine.

While many scientists point to light as the first generative force behind creation—as do the first passages in the Christian Old

Testament, Jewish Torah, and Islamic Koran—many other scientists theorize that it was sound, in fact, that promoted life as we know it today. (And some spiritual scholars would also quote Genesis to point out that God said, "Let there be light.") The process the sound philosophers emphasize is called cymatics.

Cymatics is a scientific phenomenon in which sound waves excite liquids and solids to create patterns and images. Quite literally, you could pass a sound over sand and find it has left an imprint—a symbol or shape—in the sand.[26] Some scientists now believe that cymatics is the explanation behind the appearance of life on earth billions of years ago. As chakra fans, we can point to cymatics as the reason the ancient and contemporary mystics and healers incorporate the use of shapes or symbols, as well as sounds, in their practices.

The theory is that the pure sounds of wind-driven storms passed over the ocean, creating broadband white noise, which contains all the frequencies of sound. The noise penetrated the water, which filtered out the high frequencies until only low frequency sound remained, about a hundred feet down.

These "perfect sounds" are mathematically imbued with the all-important phi ratio, the ratio found in all living things. These sounds can hypothetically create a sort of "sonic scaffolding," or patterned shapes that can organize, structure, and trigger life. This potential is especially potent near hydrothermal vents, which contain heat, a factor many believe necessary to the creation of life. The process I have just described suggests that life could have started near these vents but also that sound stored in the bubbles generated by these vents could themselves activate a life-producing reaction.

In fact, in 1996 scientists discovered pure tones in microscopic bubbles near French Polynesian vents. The theory is that these bubbles act like resonators that tune out all frequencies in the area

except those that resonate with them. These low frequency sounds then attract elements, which emerge from the hot vents and create the cymatic scaffolding necessary to build life.[27]

No matter the exact process involved, it just might be that chakra practitioners have, once again, struck a solid note through meditation with sound to reach the God within.

Laws of Classical Physics

Classical physics is substantiated by several natural laws, many of which seem to be stretched or even invalidated by subtle energy but which nonetheless rule much of the natural world. This means that chakra medicine effects change within these laws, even though it colors outside the lines to get there.

The first set of fundamental laws is attributed to Newton, whose eureka moment laid the groundwork for laws pertaining to gravitation and motion. Hypothesizing that the same force that pulls an apple toward the earth must also exist in the heavens, he conceived of gravity, a force that pulls objects toward each other or another physical mass. Related to this observation are Newton's laws of motion.

The first law of motion is that objects will tend to resist a change in motion; the second law is that it takes more force to move heavier than lighter objects the same distance; and the third law is that for every force there is a reaction equal in size but opposite in direction.[28]

Equally important are the three laws of thermodynamics, which govern the physical activity of heat, light, chemical energy, and electrical energy. The first law relates to the conservation of energy and states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, merely shifted or changed in form. This law is quite supportive of subtle energy and several quantum ideas that suggest energy can be shaped, transformed, and even traded between parallel worlds. The second law relates to entropy, which has many definitions. The classic definition of entropy is that it is the part of a system's thermal (heat-related)

energy that is unavailable for useful work. The law states that the energy in a system will eventually move from kinetic, or useable, to unavailable for use. In this scenario, therefore, entropy is a measure of disorder. However, it is also defined as information—the information that is available to be used or not. In quantum physics and chakra medicine, this definition will take precedence. The third law of thermodynamics states that the entropy of a system becomes more constant as temperature approaches absolute zero; however, most scientists believe that a system can never reach zero entropy.[29] However, recent experimentation sent an ultracold quantum gas below sub-absolute-zero temperature for the first time, which suggests that absolute laws are made to be broken. Systems based on these results could actually shift atoms upward instead of downward in reaction to gravity, seemingly defying the natural law of gravity.[30]

This same malleability to the concrete world is credited to Albert Einstein, who added twists to Newtonian understandings that still remain valid, though puzzling, today. In the early twentieth century, Einstein figured out that the laws of physics are the same for observers who are not accelerating or moving, and that the speed of light in a vacuum is independent of the motion of observers. These determinations eventually helped him create what is called the theory of general relativity, which basically says that massive objects distort the space-time continuum and, in so doing, help form gravity. While Newton said that gravity is an innate force in an object that can operate over a distance, Einstein showed that the speed of light in a vacuum is the same no matter how fast an observer is traveling. Space and time are therefore a single continuum. And then it gets odd: observer A might be experiencing one event and observer B another at the same time.[31]

Time can shift? Space is malleable? Shamans have always known this is true; if chakra medicine is anything, it is uncanny. Working with subtle energy can shift the past, change the future, and alter perceptions of the present. It can move objects from one side of the world to another.

Even in classical physics, which relates to the macro level, physicists have determined that space-time isn't consistent. Consider the black hole, a site in

space that holds so much matter that the gravitational pull won't let light escape. The collision of two black holes is now thought to create gravitational waves and create ripples in space-time.[32]

If the universe can change its pace, so can we. Exactly how this occurs has been relegated to the study of quantum physics—the analysis of the small, not the great. Just as subtle energy isn't weak by virtue of its subtlety, however, neither are the tiniest components of reality weak.

The Orange Universe: Quanta and More

In chakra medicine and subtle energy circles, nearly every response to the question of why "weird" things can happen—miracles, space-time shifts, ESP, chakra clearing, and the like—is quantum physics. This field of study changes nearly as frequently as do quanta, which are the very small, almost nonexistent subatomic particles that describe the micro-universe. So please understand that in this part of the chapter, we can only cover what is known today; stay tuned for further surprises.

Quantum is the singular term for the plural word *quanta*, which means "discrete amount," and that's what these miniature pieces of reality are. Quantum mechanics features theories that assume matter, like light, has wave qualities. Therefore, the so-called immutable laws of reality aren't exactly right. That's because quanta aren't continuous but are bound in small and discrete units that can behave like both particles and waves.

There are two basic divisions of subatomic particles. There are elementary particles such as electrons and quarks—tiny particles that carry a unique electrical charge and help compose protons, neutrons, and other particles. There are also composite particles such as protons and neutrons. Elementary particles have no substructure or smaller parts, while composite particles do.

Currently there are thirty-six confirmed fundamental particles, including antiparticles, units of antimatter. Antiparticles were discovered in 1928 by Paul Dirac, an English physicist who suggested that every particle has its own companion particle that has the same mass and spin, but with the opposite charge. When an electron meets its mate, called a positron, they cancel each

other out, both disappearing and leaving behind a pair of photons. Because light remains, antimatter is considered a source of energy. Antimatter consists of antielectrons or positrons, antiprotons, and antineutrons. Any matching pair of particle and antiparticle can be produced whenever there is enough energy to provide the necessary mass-energy. When they do meet, however, they annihilate each other, leaving their energy transformed into another form.

Twelve of these fundamental particles carry forces. This set includes the photon and the gluon, a subatomic particle that glues quarks together. The other twenty-four are called matter particles and interact with each other only indirectly. These include neutrinos, quarks, and other types of particles. Neutrinos are similar to the electron but don't carry a charge, so they are not affected by electromagnetic forces. New particles are being discovered all the time, and additional information is being added to our knowledge base almost daily.

Laws of the Orange Universe

The best way to understand the orange universe is to comprehend its laws, which are squiggly at best; then again, so is the performance of the subtle energy anatomy.

A few of the main ideas are as follows:

- The Copenhagen Interpretation. According to this theory, a subatomic particle is either a particle or a wave but only when measured or observed as one or the other. In other words, nothing is real unless it is observed.
- Particles can jump from one state to another (wave to particle and vice versa). This means that quantum waves aren't like classical waves—they are not continuous. They consistently change, which means that physical reality can continually change.
- Even though reality becomes "fixed" when observed, the possible routes that an electron could take create ghosts, which are called

wave functions. As was implied earlier, when no one is watching, an electron can leap anywhere it wants to go. When it's watched, it has to select a path. When forced into a commitment, the result is what is called the "collapse of the wave function."

- We cannot know both the position and the momentum of a particle at the same time. The more precise one is, the less precise the other is. This assumption is called the Uncertainly Principle and insinuates that we have to operate with possibilities, not exactitudes. Einstein didn't like this idea, wanting to be able to measure both. The only way you can measure both, however, is by sending two particles off in opposite directions and making sure there are no impediments. At a certain moment, you can then measure the position of one particle and the momentum of another, but only if they are going faster than the speed of light—something else Einstein didn't think was possible.
- Quantum physics has a unique rule about spin, or the rotation of a particle around its axis. All particles spin, and some can spin around two axes at the same time. According to the Uncertainly Principle, however, you can't figure out both speed and spin direction. Once again, measurement disturbs what is being measured.
- Yet another observable quantum phenomenon is that an electron can —and must—be in two or more places at a time. Likewise, particles have to spin in two or more directions at a time. Observation selects the placement.
- Entanglement is a well-accepted quantum theory that states that when two or more objects interrelate, they will continue to affect each other, even when separated by thousands of miles—or dimensions.[33]

Key Figures in Energy History—Who Got Us Here?

There are many figures in the Western world whose scientific contributions have led to the substantiation of subtle energy. Here are brief profiles of a few of these individuals, organized to reveal the progression of subtle energy ideas across modern times.

Wilhelm Reich lived between 1897 and 1957. Through experimentation, Reich discovered what he called orgone energy, the fundamental and pulsating force in nature. Able to penetrate matter at various speeds, it responds to—and can create—magnetism and electrostatic charges.[34]

Dr. Harold Burr, an important theorist in energetics, conducted research at Yale between 1916 and the 1950s, finally asserting that life is molded by "Life-fields" or "L-fields," which are equated to electrical fields. These are subtle energy fields that "underlie" measurable fields. Because of this, if you alter a subtle L-field—which shamans and chakra workers do using the types of tools covered in part 3—the measurable electromagnetic fields change, and concrete reality shifts. He eventually proposed that these fields are morphological, or instrumental in organizing living tissue. Other researchers added the idea of T-fields to this story, proposing these as able to convey thoughts through activities including ESP. These fields might be more magnetic. These two fields together create the basis of subtle energies, L-fields creating bodily blueprints and T-fields carrying thought to modify the L-fields.[35]

Dr. Royal Rife and Dr. Elmer Nemes are renowned for creating microscopes that were allegedly able to interact with subtle energy. Rife invented the Rife Universal Microscope in 1932 and seemingly proved that disease and illness are a result of the

energetic fields that surround and intertwine with our bodies, holding even the smallest parts of ourselves together. By focusing monochromatic beams of illumination, Rife discovered that organisms always appeared as the same color, no matter the medium they were in. For instance, the virus of Bacillus coli was always mahogany; the virus of cancer, purple-red. Rife and his research team established a "mortal oscillatory rate," or vibration that could kill the microbes of approximately sixty diseases. Using various frequencies, they could also change microbes from one form to another, transforming germs into other pathogenic organisms. Basically, the microscope illuminated the vibrations showing the life force of these organisms.

Dr. Elmer Nemes invented the Nemescope in 1954. This device enabled him to see the lines of energy force between nucleatic cores, showing that there are subtle energies linking living forms.

Nikola Tesla was an inventor, electrical and mechanical engineer, physicist, and futurist who lived into the mid-twentieth century and invented several near-miraculous electrical devices including radios, remote control technology, and motors. One of his most famous inventions was the Tesla coil, a high-frequency air-core transformer and driver circuit that discharged an extremely high voltage in electrical arcs, creating powerful electrical fields.[36] It was thought that this coil unleashed the power of ether, or subtle energy.[37]

Wael Hazem Fouda is an architectural student in Egypt who offers an interesting explanation of Tesla's work. (Fouda has studied with Dr. Ibrahim Kharim, whom I'll discuss in the next section, "Explaining Subtle Energy." Kharim's research shows that geometrical shapes and colors affect physical reality.) Fouda says Tesla's discoveries show that subtle energy is a pure physical electrical interaction based on the fact that geometrical shapes and living beings create high-voltage discharges, as has

been shown on a Kirlian camera, a tool used to show subtle energies. This interpretation is dependent on thinking of the body as an advanced RLC circuit—just like the Tesla coil. Subtle energy (or chi) is therefore electrostatic currents with high frequencies that in turn create electrical fields, magnetic fields, and electromagnetic fields.[38]

Trevor J. Constable lived in the mid- to late twentieth century and named Reich's orgone energy "chemical ether," relating it to nature. Discovering that it flows in different directions, he found that it responded to geometric forms and structures and is manifested according to the golden ratio, also called the golden mean or divine proportion.

Marcel Vogel is a well-known figure to subtle energy aficionados. Until his death in the late twentieth century, this scientist devoted much of his life to finding uses for crystals, which have the capacity to store and amplify information. When cut according to Vogel's standards, a crystal emanates a coherent field of energy, transfers data, and can interact with mind energy. Vogel's experiments suggested that this geometrical crystal responds to more than simple electromagnetic fields; in other words, it can "read" subtle energy.[39]

Dr. Bjorn Nordenström, who lived into the early twenty-first century, was the former chairman of the Nobel Assembly in Sweden. He discovered that there is a "secondary electrical circuit" in the body, one that uses the principles of electromagnetism to negotiate the flow of energy in the body. This system interacts with, but is separate from, the central nervous system; he believed that it included—or might even be—the meridians and acupoints, and that it governs the reason that mental activity can promote healing. He also showed that changes in the electrical potential between points in the body led to the growth of tumors, and by activating certain electrical

fields, we can turn on defense mechanisms that destroy these tumors.[40]

Explaining Subtle Energy

We still must ask what subtle energy is. Like every form of energy, subtle energy is first and foremost information that moves. It is simply less measurable by current technology than is physical energy. But subtle energy is much more than this. Perhaps we can deepen our understanding of it by showing off a bit of what it can accomplish.

Consider Mahendra Kuma Trivedi, known as Trivedi or Guruji. Ever since one special evening in India in 1995, Trivedi has demonstrated an ability to shift physical reality thousands of times, in areas ranging from agriculture to microbiology. What does he do? He administers "blessings," none longer than a few minutes and never twice for any particular concern. University and government studies affirm his effectiveness.

In one study, Trivedi modified the behavior of dozens of crop species, increasing seed germination and survival rates among blessed plants to 99.5 percent, compared to 60–65 percent in control crops.[41] In another university-based study on chickpeas, Trivedi's blessed plot yields increased more than 350 percent over control yields.[42] And Triveda's blessings have shifted other forms of matter as well. They have substantially altered other organic and inorganic materials and even DNA.[43]

As magical as his abilities may seem to us, Trivedi is one of innumerable people who have performed such "mini miracles" throughout history. Jesus Christ, Buddha, and prophets, gurus, and sages of nearly every religion have been chronicled as miracle workers. J. R. Newton, MD, achieved healings for hundreds of people through laying on of hands in the nineteenth century.[44] Dr. Yan Xin graduated from medical school in China in 1977 and began healing people by projecting chi energy.[45] John of God, a contemporary healer in Brazil, has healed thousands of individuals through psychic surgery. His fans include spiritual leader Wayne Dwyer, who credits John of God with

freeing him from leukemia.[46] And Dr. Ibrahim Kharim, Egyptian architect and scientist, has used symbols and color to grow apples with an incredibly long shelf life, heal critical illnesses, and even improve air quality on airplanes.[47]

These are all examples of the workings of subtle energy, which is able to effect change in physical reality through more or less quantum means. To help you better understand subtle energy, I will next present a few of the theories about it. While they may contradict one another, it's not necessarily important to choose between them; it is likely that some aspects of all these theories reflect the realities of subtle energy. It is helpful for chakra medicine experts, however, to be at least slightly familiar with all these ideas, if only to help explain what they are doing and how.

The Many Worlds Theory

The "many worlds theory" suggests that subtle energy is a product of many worlds. This theory exists in other incarnations as ideas about parallel worlds, multiuniverses, and more. Basically, the concept asserts that every choice we *don't* make creates its own spin-off world.

How might this look on a personal level?

Once we make a life decision, a scientist would say that the wave function collapses and a reality is formed, the one now called real. Another part of us, however, continues as a ghost in the nonselected and invisible reality, thus fulfilling the law of entropy. Entropy—information—doesn't really disappear or wind down, although it might appear to; rather, it is shifted into an alternative reality. Under this explanation, there are innumerable branches of reality of which we are unaware.

A beneficial consequence of this theory is that by shifting our perception, we could collapse our current reality and access a new possibility. After all, possibility exists, doesn't it, "somewhere else"? We implement this trade-off through the biofield or matrix that remains linked with the disappeared or less accessible realities.

The Pilot Wave Theory and the Supersonic Nature of Energy

Some scientists theorize that a pilot wave accompanies all physical waves. This wave determines where a particle or photon will appear; by nature, it is superluminal (moving faster than the speed of light). This wave obeys an implicit or hidden order and would suggest that reality is nonlocal rather than local, or interconnected at all levels. This pilot wave can also be shifted using consciousness. Basically, changes occur outside of the space-time continuum and are delivered in the physical universe. The entanglement theory would also support an idea like this, as we would be best able to choose a new reality based on previous connections.[48]

The caveat to this theory is that for it to be correct, subtle energy must move faster than the speed of light. As we have already explored in this chapter, the ability of mass to accomplish this goal is highly questionable, although some of the theories involved in how quantum physics works clearly propose the possibility. However, several studies have revealed that it is possible for energy—and some scientists would say energy in the form of frequency in particular—to move faster than the speed of light.

One of the key relevant experiments, conducted at the NEC Research Institute in Princeton, New Jersey, early in the twenty-first century, demonstrated the superluminal movement of a light pulse through a special medium. The peak of the light pulse arrived at the end of the medium before it even entered it.

A light pulse is a combination wave of different frequencies, which operate like constructive waves to form a pulse and then interfere to cancel each other out everywhere else. This can cause a pulse of the original wave to travel faster than the speed of light.[49]

This astounding event only occurred with the assistance of a special dispersion region and other unusual means, but it does show that the wave nature of light can include the capacity for superliminal movement, thus effectively breaking the space-time barrier.[50]

Quantum entanglement can also help explain the seemingly faster-than-light movement that this and other theories imply. Once linked, subatomic particles (or fields) continue to share information, no matter their separation

in space. For light waves, the energy is related to frequency. A photon, for instance, is not dependent on mass but on frequency, which has momentum. It is therefore possible for information to transfer without the preventative factor of mass entering the equation. What role might chakras play in a universe in which everything is essentially entangled? One of the simplest theories involving chakras as well as other subtle energy organs is that they can convert one form of energy to another, such as physical to subtle and vice versa. In the section "Laws of Classical Physics" a few pages back, I mentioned teleportation of energy and objects across space. Gurus and mystics are well known for their abilities to pull the proverbial coin out of the air as well as tell fortunes, predict events, and more. I believe that these types of mystical or supernatural occurrences, when performed by a person, are at least partially conducted through the chakras and other subtle organs, all of which perform energy conversion. Might chakras, which are both physical and subtle, not serve as our steering wheel for consciousness by teleporting ideas or properties slower and faster than the speed of light?

Yet another study suggests that not only can energy move faster than the speed of light, but subtle anatomy can play a role in reading this energy. Conducted by A. Podshibyakin, an electrophysiologist at the Institute of Clinical Physiology in Kiev, the study assessed acupuncture points during peak solar flares. Podshibyakin noticed that shifts in acupuncture voltage occurred at the same times as did the solar flares, although it took 8.3 minutes for measurements to show up on a tobiscope, which measures electrical conductivity properties. Podshibyakin believed that this instant effect occurred because there was a type of energy that could travel faster than the speed of light, and that the subtle anatomy is designed to relate to this form of energy.[51]

Connective Tissue Theory

As you may have inferred from previous discussions in this chapter, subtle energy might also involve the ability of the photonic body to register biophotons, as well as to communicate through a biofield of light. Missing,

however, is the explanation of how the body proper is able to serve as a communicator of light. The short answer is “through connective tissue,” which, as you will read further along in this part, has been shown to house the meridian system.

Connective tissue, including the myofascial tissue that provides support and protection for your muscles and bones, is made of fibers that are ordered in crystalline arrays. Connective tissue is a continuous fabric that extends throughout the bodies of all mammals, ensheathing all major bodily systems including the circulatory and nervous systems. Made of collagen fibers embedded in a gel-like substance, this tissue effectively turns us into giant crystals with piezoelectric properties; it generates electrical fields when compressed or stretched.

Any movement of the body sends electrical messages through it, allowing one part of the body to communicate with another. Subatomic particles in particular are able to move very quickly through this quasi-crystalline material, creating quantum waves that link us with atmospheric energies, brain waves, and subtle energies, or chi. The most important connecting nodes are the meridians. [52]

This idea is substantiated by the research of key scientists including Dr. Bjorn Nordenström. Nordenström demonstrated that organisms are composites of electromagnetic fields. In fact, he found that cells are similar to semiconductors, able to convey information electrically. The major players in this communication are the blood vessels, which operate like cables surrounded by electromagnetic fields, and meridians, which dwell within the connective tissue.[53]

The Virtual Nature of the Vacuum and the Role of Consciousness

Is there any way around the idea that subtle energy must move faster than the speed of light? Yes—because new research in France and Germany indicates that light might not travel at a fixed rate; rather, it can fluctuate, all because of the existence of the vacuum.

As we saw earlier, a vacuum is not empty. It is actually filled with pairs of virtual particles, which are also called "ephemeral" particles. (Or, as Dr. Michael Scroggins suggests further along in this chapter, it might be filled with frequencies, not particles.) In this scenario, however, particles are paired in relationships such as electron-positron or quark-antiquark.

Virtual particles are those that exist for only a short amount of time. Since the characteristics of a vacuum fluctuate—because these particles keep appearing and disappearing—the speeds of these energies might do so as well.[54]

Subtle energy has everything to do with these subatomic particles and their virtual nature. On the atomic level, more than 99 percent of the mass of the visible universe is made of protons and neutrons. The heaviest ingredients of these atomic particles are their quantum units, mainly quarks and gluons. However, these atomic particles are far heavier than the weight of their perceivable subatomic particles. The rest of the weight comes from the virtual particles, which add weight only when they appear, which they do only for a short time. As they are actually fluctuations of vacuum energy, the existence of these virtual particles has led scientists to wonder if matter is really made of vacuum fluctuations.[55]

What this means is that energy that doesn't even exist in physical reality can, at any moment, become matter. This theory, decades old, was recently confirmed by a 2011 experiment at Chalmers University in Gothenburg, Sweden, in which scientists turned "virtual" light particles—which flicker in and out of existence in a vacuum—into measurable material particles.[56]

How are vacuum-based virtual particles transformed into material particles? There are several ideas about this, which could all tie together as an explanation. Enter stage left "the Higgs field," a field that creates mass out of the quantum vacuum in the form of virtual Higgs bosons.[57] Often called the "God particle," the Higgs boson is actually more like a field that exists everywhere and "everywhen." It is basically (and quite simplistically) able to convert one type of particle into another.

Yet other scientists emphasize the presence of zero-point energy, the energy

that's left when you remove all other energy from a quantum system.[58] The idea is that this energy carries infinite possibilities and only assumes form when manifested. As you will notice in "Various Names for Subtle Energy" on page 384, zero point is only one of the many names for subtle energy.

Part of what makes subtle energy unique is that it can be at least partially directed by human consciousness. In other words, because of subtle energy, our consciousness gets to vote on what will appear from the vacuum and then disappear again within it.

Defining consciousness is a big job; it is a concept inky and muddled, biochemical and vast. I propose we borrow an idea from the keen minds of Allan Combs and Ken Wilber, pioneers of integral thought, to emphasize the fact that consciousness, which is imbedded in the universe, is linked to perspective, which is subjective in nature.[59] It is our subjective perspective that helps decide what should appear or not out of the vacuum, or zero-point energy.

There are thousands of studies that document the effects of consciousness on physical reality. The Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory (PEAR Lab) alone has accumulated more than thirty years of research on this topic, showing that everything in the universe is connected; and not only that: it has also demonstrated that the mind acts upon—and can alter—objects, people, and events despite the separation of time and space.[60]

One particularly noteworthy study, which included the efforts of Lynne McTaggart and Gary Schwartz, among others, charged delegates at a London conference with sending intention to one of two geranium leaves at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The leaf that received the intention literally started to glow: in other words, its biophoton emissions increased. The other leaf was unchanged.[61]

Consciousness isn't attributed only to the theory of virtual particles; many subtle energy specialists believe that no matter how subtle energy works, it can be directed by consciousness—prayer, intention, or focus.

My Personal "Many Speeds Theory" in Relation to Chakras

My own personal understanding of subtle energy is based on understanding that energy can move at different speeds, which can be directed by consciousness. Chakras can link to consciousness to process the data in these various speeds of energy, translate them, and communicate accordingly.

A black-and-white distinction—but one that will still leave room for gray and polka dots—is that subtle energies move faster than the speed of light and physical energies travel slower than the speed of light. (As I'll soon note, there are many types of extrasensory energies, but this is the easiest way to describe the difference between subtle and physical energies.) Of course, Einstein would roll over in his grave at this suggestion.

Decades ago, Albert Einstein asserted that matter—which includes light—would never be able to move faster than the speed of light in a vacuum because it would become too massive as it approached that speed. But then an experiment run by Lijun Wang at the NEC Research Institute in Princeton proved Einstein wrong. Wang's team sent a laser pulse at more than three hundred times the speed of light into a chamber and observed this pulse breaking the speed of light, thus handing esoteric practitioners everywhere the proof they needed to substantiate their claims that subtle energy has always moved so fast that the normal laws of nature don't seem to apply.

As Wang noted, however, the Newtonian laws of the universe hadn't been broken at all. He and his colleagues were able to explain the outcome of their experiment in terms of the classical theory of wave propagation. Nonetheless, their experiment achieved what they called a "negative group velocity," breaking the speed of light in a vacuum.[62]

My simple way of explaining these findings pulls from quantum logic. If an energy holds no mass, it can't gain more mass as it "speeds up." As well, quantum entanglement has proven that there is a timeless connection between two energies that have once connected. If there are instances where energy can seemingly move beyond the measurement of time, then, in essence, that information is "moving faster" than the speed of light. We could call these energies subtle energy. Energy bound by mass or at least measured by it,

however, would appear to be moving slower than the speed of light; hence these are physical energies.

Quantum physics offers further explanation of why subtle energy is able to transcend 3-D reality, outrunning the Newtonian traffic cops of the universe. The determining factor is consciousness.

Dr. Amit Goswami is a theoretical quantum physicist. As Goswami explains it, all objects are nothing more than possibilities. Our consciousness "selects" what will appear physically, quite often "choosing" its desires from the subtle world. These choices are like blueprints that lie within nonphysical and nonlocal fields. Once our conscious (or unconscious) self-selects a blueprint, it appears in physical reality. Hence this suddenly appearing energy is faster than the speed of light—or at least, transcending the limitations of third-dimensional time.

Chakras are like libraries that contain or can "order in" the blueprints we could possibly choose from. Goswami calls the original blueprints the morphogenetic field. The reason a chakra moves is that it is applying vital energy—let's borrow from the Hindu system in this case and call it prana—to the act of manifesting that blueprint.[63] When a chakra makes a selection based on the workings of our own consciousness, subtle energy shapes physical reality. This type of manifestation can cause subtle energy to appear lightning fast—and it is quick from the seat we sit in, which is affixed to the passage of time. But the actual process is more like a door that opens and shuts than a race among molecules.

I find these thoughts strangely comforting, suggestive that what seems magical is actually logical. It also answers questions that will arise in later chapters, in which we explore the various planes of reality chakras inhabit. Across time, many esoterics have suggested there are layers and layers of supernatural energy, organized into categories that can be labeled as energy bodies, planes of reality, or various worlds.

For instance, many experts suggest that chakras work with a third type of energy, called causal energy because it causes, or originates, the other energies. According to this theory, all humans have a causal body that exists

before conception. It is the pinnacle of personal consciousness and serves as the template for the organization of the subtle body system after conception and throughout life. After death, the causal body transforms into a depository for all of the virtues cultivated during a lifetime. It is a treasure chest of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual depth we acquire through our soul and our life experiences.[64]

I believe that chakras contain all three types of energy (and even more) and are therefore able to connect with all planes of reality. As you encounter these variations throughout this book, you will see that all of them emphasize the fact that reality—and the energy that composes it—graduates from lowest to highest order. The same is true both within each chakra and in relation to the body. The chakra's grossest energy is closest to the body, and its causal energy is farthest away. This would mean that, only in terms of these three energies, the following could be true:

- At the gross level, a chakra is associated with physical organs and activities affecting the health of its correlated nerve plexus, endocrine gland, bodily area, and the thoughts and feelings the body produces. This is slow-moving energy.
- At the subtle level, the chakra interacts with psychic energies, spinning what doesn't exist into existence and vice versa. Subtle energy is highly interactive, operating through fields, channels, and our energy centers to link us with everything and everyone else in this universe. We are now working with energies moving faster than the speed of light (from a Newtonian point of view), explainable mainly by quantum theory.
- At the causal level, a chakra is able to reach toward the higher spiritual principles associated with a particular chakra's concerns, thus elevating our gross and common experiences and our subtle and psychic connections to a more spiritual state. We are working with energies faster than the speed of light, not only directed by and directing consciousness, but perhaps even made of some sort of

consciousness. In the mystical arenas, I believe we organize our consciousness—and external energies—through symbols such as shapes and archetypes that can include Jungian archetypes, deity focus, and more.

As Ken Wilber, a leading thinker in energetics and spirituality, explains, a chakra is therefore a "family" with gross, subtle, and causal members. These three energies represent the function and potential of every chakra. Our job is to evolve through these three stages in each chakra's arena; while this development can be uneven, it moves us toward an awareness of higher realms and our higher selves. A chakra's involvement with these energies can be quite complex, however, for the chakra itself operates as an intermediary between gross, subtle, and causal bodies of intelligence and is able to convert the energy of one dimension into that of another.[65]

Various Names for Subtle Energy

Zero-point energy is one term for the particles that can appear materially and then fall back into the ocean of unmanifested potential. It is one of many names for subtle energy.[66]

Many other energy concepts are often substituted for "subtle energy," including the terms scalar, vector, tensor, and spinor fields. Scalar energy acts like a field more than a wave, filling in the environment and transferring energy into solid objects—even penetrating these objects.[67] These fields are different from vector fields, which associate a vector to every region. Physicist William Tiller highlights magnetic vector fields and suggests that these mediate between subtle energy fields and the electromagnetic world.[68]

Other potential sources of subtle energy are tensor and spinor fields. A spinor is a vector relating to spin states rather than space-time, and tensors are mathematical objects that transform

as the space-time coordinates transform.[69] Still other words used in the exploration of subtle energy include time-reversed waves, which send particles forward and backward on the space-time continuum; non-Hertzian waves, electrical waves postulated by Tesla that can signal superluminally; and longitudinal waves, which can transport energy through a medium without permanently transporting matter.[70] What is most important in this array of ideas is that the variety of theories all emphasize the presence of a unified energy that underlies the traditional electromagnetic vectors, with an implicate order embedded inside the quantum virtual universe. Subtle energy still comes down to operating as a unique form of regular energy that transcends the space-time continuum.

The Role of Torsion Fields

How does the type of thought transference I just described occur—and so instantaneously, seemingly breaking the barriers of space-time? Fifty years ago, Professor Nikolai Kozyrev, a respected Russian astrophysicist, began answering this question, discovering a new force in physics that he called the density of time. This force involved a twisting in space that he labelled torsion.

Apparently anything with mass can create its own torsion field or wave. When a particle spin suddenly changes direction, the particle produces torsion waves, a form of particle radiation. Since all elementary particles have mass and spin, they can generate their own torsion fields. The direction of the twist—to the right or the left—predicts whether entropy (defined as "lack of order" but also "information") will be increased or decreased at the point of origin, with the opposite occurring at a point elsewhere. Thus is balance ensured within the entirety of a system.[71] Bottom line: because of the way torsion fields operate, we could say that when information "disappears" from one place, it can also "appear" elsewhere.[72]

Torsion fields create different outcomes depending on which way they are moving. These differences are consistent with chakra and other energetic medicines, as well as with the flow of different physical cells and fields. As well, meridian-based systems also run either yin or yang—feminine or masculine. As shall become obvious further on, torsion fields go far in addressing the ways in which subtle energy anatomy works.[73]

A torsion field can also create patterns with its spins, encoding these patterns with information. Subtle energy work such as that accomplished through the application of ESP, hands on healing, prayer, focus, or energy medicine techniques is often accompanied by the use of shapes to produce change, as I noted in an earlier mention of Dr. Ibrahim Kharim's work. While particle shifts can create torsion fields that result in patterns, which in turn act upon the vacuum, the opposite also can be true. Patterns—or even colors and sounds—can invoke shifts that result in alterations of reality.

Several physicists are now bending their minds to this idea, long held by ancient mystics. As an article by Meinard Kuhlmann in *Scientific American* points out, physicists have typically believed that particles and force fields underlie reality; instead, these energies might actually themselves respond to bundles of properties such as color and shape.[74]

Might it really take only one persistent thought or feeling (or color or shape) to spin a new reality—one that might persist on its own? The evidence for this is amassing.[75] If so, how can the average person use this knowledge to make a difference?

I had a dream once that provided me with a clue. In the dream, I was dropped into the past and returned to a restaurant where I had worked years ago. My money (and shoes) remained behind. A waitress named Nancy asked the restaurant owners to employ me; they said yes. Then Nancy disappeared and the owners forgot about me.

What is my "take away"? Subtle energy follows organized energy. The owners were focused on Nancy; with her out of the equation, I meant nothing to them. If we want to create a different reality, something new, we must draw energy to the desire or goal, not project it elsewhere. We must organize

ourselves into the desired reality; virtual particles will follow suit. If, indeed, form follows consciousness, perhaps we can bless a new world into being.

Putting It All Together: A Brave New Model

Is it possible to merge the main theories related to classical and quantum physics and arrive at a theory of subtle energy that has practical applications? Yes, it is—if you are Dr. C. Michael Scroggins.

After sharing ideas about subtle energy on a radio show, I received an email from Dr. Scroggins, who had been listening. Having earned nine advanced degrees, Dr. Scroggins is at the forefront of several fields, including research and development, electrical engineering, energy resources, information technology, and technological diagnostics related to healing.

During our subsequent exchanges, Dr. Scroggins presented what I call the Unified Theory of Energy—which, as you shall see, should perhaps be called the Unifying Properties of Frequency. After I describe his theories, I will also outline a few of their applications, which have the potential to transform both chakra and allopathic medicine, transportation, and even nutrition, mainly because subtle energy levels are the driving force behind large molecular structures. I'll offer an expanded exploration of Dr. Scroggins's ideas about chakras in chapter 20.

Driving toward a comprehensive explanation of subtle energy, we jump to molecules, which compose physical structures. According to Dr. Scroggins's research, all molecules share a common radial size with energy and mass. A radius (r) is a straight line from the center of an item being measured to its perimeter. The radial size is the p r squared of any item. While acknowledging that molecules are of different size and composition, the energy associated with molecules—frequency—has the same mathematical relationship in terms of size as related mass.

What makes this point really interesting is that any form of matter is always an exact size, and no matter what size that may be, it rides inside an exact frequency, the radial of which is also p r squared, revealing a seemingly sacred design to the universe. Not only do molecules themselves travel within

frequencies, but bundles of molecules that compose physical systems, including our own bodies, are programmed by frequency. In fact, frequency is the baseline of the universe, present in (and around) every form of matter, determining what is going to matter—or not.

The power of frequencies as the baseline component that will alter or sustain physical reality is total; you can have frequencies without matter riding in their grasp, but you cannot have matter without frequencies. It is frequency, says Scroggins, that determines what will appear in physical reality, not the other way around—and it has always been so, as all the frequencies in this universe have been here since the beginning of creation.

Before the universe began, matter was compressed within tightly formed frequencies. Even compressed, this original matter moved across vast waves of frequencies. When it encountered a mass of matter that had similar properties, the two masses combined and broke out of the compressed frequencies they were riding on, traveling outward in all directions from the zero-point energy transmission. This expansion—Creation—lost speed, allowing matter to gather and form larger combinations of matter. More and more molecules gained mass, reached critical mass, and formed in ever-increasing size. Matter slowed down, and the process was repeated until the resulting universe we now occupy was formed.

Within this universe there is energy we can see, touch, and feel, which we call physical matter. But what makes this physical world work is frequency. Gravity is a frequency. The so-called emptiness or the vacuum, which we discussed earlier in this chapter, is also all about frequency, consisting of a mass of frequencies located in a variety of dimensions. Even antimatter is a frequency of the type that seeks the path of least resistance through the universe.

As confusing as it might seem, the universe only makes sense if we perceive frequencies as surrounding everything and everything moving across frequencies. Visualize, if you will, billions of frequencies passing through each atom. Frequencies are not static—nothing is—but they are only vibrated into what we call “being” as molecules skim against them. In other words,

reality becomes concrete when the traveling frequencies "match" the frequencies of molecules "vibrating" them into existence.

Energy travels across and through frequencies, just as we do. In fact, we humans are a large compilation of varying structural masses that are bound by critical mass overlaps between cellular combinations. For all that, we pass through countless billions of frequencies as the earth spins, revolving around the sun. In the middle of this swirl, as I said, nothing is ever static, but because of the presence of frequencies everywhere, neither is anything disconnected. All of the matter in the universe creates a "butterfly effect," meaning that it all interrelates, especially in relationships and other areas that are important to us.

How does the power of the "observer" come into play? This is the quantum physics proposal featured in "Laws of the Orange Universe" earlier in this chapter, which asserts that a particle can only manifest when it is perceived, with its corresponding shadow, or ghost, flickering back into quantum space, perhaps to be called into physicality at a different time. As Dr. Scroggins sees it, the missing explanation for this is called dimensional phasing. For example, according to the observer theory, we believe that we are seeing a red apple because we are producing the energy required to perceive it. Somewhere "out there" that apple might be green, but we are "choosing" to see it as red. The truth is that we perceive a red rather than green apple because that apple is operating with a frequency that says "red"—and because we activate that frequency.

Dr. Scroggins once participated in a research project that focused on changing the wavelengths of light, the goal being to alter the color of the foods being tested. The lab could change a Red Delicious apple into a Granny Smith apple, at least in terms of color. The apples tasted different depending on the color: when turned green, the Red Delicious red apple tasted like a Granny Smith green apple, and vice versa.

Is it possible to take this process a step further? What if you want to change the chair you are on into a sofa, the better to take a nap? It is far easier to change the chair from brown to purple or textured to satin. It's even possible

to expand or reduce the chair's size, much as Alice in Wonderland is able to nibble a cracker and shrink or grow. The latter is possible because objects are already in a compressed state, meaning that the frequencies creating them are holding the molecules in a set proximity to each other. You could further compress the frequencies and suddenly the chair is the perfect size for a dollhouse, or "add more air" and end up with a chair the size of your house.

Things in the physical universe don't change as often as would be implied because everything in this world, including our cells and molecules themselves, is coded. When molecular structures don't align—when there is a disease process in the body or interference between planets—there is still vibration, however, meaning there is still potential for change, repair, or creativity. Molecules are merely the surface of a vast ocean of movement. To move enough frequencies is to move mountains. When the codes of a particular object—say, a bodily organ—become too distorted, the result is gaps, or open areas, in the frequencies.

In this scenario, subtle energy is what seeks to fill in the gaps, taking on, communicating with, or drawing the needed frequency. We perceive the existence of the subtle energy when it produces a shift in physical reality. When we seek to actually create a change, such as to heal an illness for ourselves or another, the frequency we concentrate on activates like-matter (matter that resonates to the frequency of our intention) instantly, everywhere else in the universe, for as long as we can sustain this activity.

In terms of the physical body, the cells in our body form sets of molecular structures, such as organs or organ systems. These structural masses serve their particular cells as well as the group and our body as a whole. The groups have inborn indicators that establish their molecular vibration and frequency "set points" that serve the body as a whole. Frequency variations activate these indicators, or strands of information, at the chromosomal and molecular levels.

These indicators and optimum frequency levels are programmed into our various systems whether they are systems of the physical body or subtle energy systems. When all systems are "go," our bodies can rebuild any

damage to our cellular structures, and the reality of an organ system will remain pretty much the same until the vibration shifts more or less than a very small amount: according to Scroggins, plus or minus .0000002. At this point, cells transition and the mass can operate differently; something new occurs, for better or worse. We now have a program change, a new normal, or a new "not good." Subtle energy now works within the neural net sequences to attempt to fill in the gaps, or rebalance the system.

As I mentioned earlier, a gap is a rift, an open area in the interplay of frequencies. It is a place where frequency exists and vibrates but there aren't any molecules at that frequency that are being vibrated into being. This is essentially "energy without energy" or a place where there is potential but nothing material coming into form. Imagine seeing an open area or gap in the connection between someone's soul and their body. This might be an area of imbalance—or even the moment when they could die; the soul leaves because it can't hold on to its bodily form anymore. A gap could also indicate an area where a person could catch a virus or where something destructive can get in.

Gaps aren't "bad." They are points of interaction that allow us to read frequency signatures and determine what is going on—or isn't. They tell us where we need to send a new frequency—or subtle energy program—to fill a hole and create something healthy where there is a problem. In fact, if there were no gaps, we couldn't interact. We wouldn't need each other. We couldn't "become" each other. We couldn't love. We couldn't send or activate frequencies to create material change. And everything can potentially change. Since the universe is filled with the very same frequencies it was "born" with, it can always be turned from disorder back into order or at least from an old order into a new one.

Within this context, intention is desire packaged within frequencies: frequencies that can travel across the entire universe to activate like-matter. It's pretty easy to set the intention of reactivating what we are used to. But what if we want to be something different than we've been? What if we want to get well, earn more money, become kinder? We can use our intuition and

inner gifts to select and focus on specific frequencies—the desirable ones, not just those that will continue to travel down the path of least resistance.

Sometimes it's easier to make these shifts by working with the subtle energy anatomy than with the physical body. Chakras and other energetic organs are obviously frequency based. For instance, a chakra is a hybrid of overtones and undertones that reflect the energy that is moving into and out of the body. It is also an interface where we can read the frequencies of the body and use subtle energy techniques to activate different physical reactions. Truly gifted chakra workers are those who can transmit the desired frequency at a sustained level long enough for another person to find this frequency. What better place to work than stationed at a revolving door such as a chakra that is attuned to higher frequencies, not only dense ones?

Dr. Scroggins's work advances into the subtle energy realm but is also rooted in the concrete. His research and theories enable us to read all codes of energy, including those in the body, not only those available through some sort of ethereal tracking system. Toward this end, he has created technological devices that can assess someone with a challenge or disease process, determine exactly which organic system is imbalanced, and pinpoint with exactitude what will help, all because everything in this world comes down to molecular patterns and the frequencies that can sustain or shift them. It all comes down to the type of "love" that can fill gaps.

The Multidimensional Model: Subtle Levels Between the Physical and Heavenly

There are more layers of reality than physical and subtle ones. Arguably we could say that subtle energy, being immeasurable, contains all other nonmeasurable energy, but we don't need to stop there. Dozens of subtle energy experts and spiritual systems have postulated sublayers of invisible reality and even perceived energy bodies and fields that interact with them. The systems related to these layers are covered in part 8. In this section I want to introduce you to a few of the most important ideas about these layers, or levels, of energy. This will lay the groundwork for the systems described

that present ideas about multiple worlds, layers of reality, energetic fields, and energy bodies.

Basically these various subtle levels of energy interface between the gross, or physical, self and the world. Many of these layers also interact with the auric layers. All such models suggest that we are multidimensional beings composed of a spectrum of energetic frequencies. This same concept is often applied to all living beings, as well as the earth, objects in the cosmos, and the multiverse, or layers of the universe. A brief review of the development of these concepts over time will enable a more scientific discussion.

Levels of Subtle Reality Over Time

Emerging from ancient Hindu practices are the koshas, the layers of reality that unfold through the enlightenment process. As you learned in part 1, these layers, from the most physical to the most supreme, are physical, energy, mental, wisdom, and bliss. These are the five sheaths of the human being.

In ancient times, similar views were developed and shared by Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Hebrews, and other cultures. Artifacts from Egypt point to a structured model composed of energetic and spiritual bodies. For example, the Egyptians called the soul the *ba*; the immortal body the *sahu*; and the physical body without consciousness the *khat*. (See chapter 26 for an exploration of the Egyptian system.)[76] The mystical Jewish Kabbalah describes four worlds or levels of reality within which lie the sephiroth, chakra-like energetic bodies.[77] (See chapter 28 for a depiction of this system.) And the Sufis see five levels of consciousness, including *nasut*, the physical realm, and *malakut*, the subtle or angelic realm, all of which are covered in chapter 28.[78]

Many of these ancient systems, and the mysteries associated with them, underlie more contemporary Western ones. Modern systems and the key thinkers who created them are covered in depth in part 8, but I will mention a few highlights here. As Manly Hall asserted, the secret doctrine of the Freemasons is rooted in the mysteries of Dionysus or Greek traditions, Roman ideals, and the beliefs of the Arabian Rosicrucians. The mysteries of

Persia and Egypt moved to the Arabian Desert and then traveled to Europe via the Knights Templar and Rosicrucians. Eventually great thinkers including Paracelsus collected this knowledge and assembled it into their own systems. Leaders including Benjamin Franklin and other Masons in the "New World" of America eventually held these systems in confidence.

What all such systems share is that they feature key chakra medicine concepts such as knowledge of energetic anatomy, sacred geometry, and the existence of subtle levels of reality. Closer to modern times, many of these ideas were finally folded into the systems presented by the leaders of groups including the Theosophists and Neo-Theosophists and key figures including Rudolf Steiner and Barbara Ann Brennan.

What do some of these systems look like? Well, Paracelsus presented a material body made from earth elements but also a sidereal body that accesses an illuminating light, making the human being a perfect mix of essence and energy.[79] Manly Hall, drawing from Hindu philosophy and the secrets of the various mystical orders, proposed five bodies: the *sthula sharira,* or physical body; the living *shariri,* or etheric and vital bodies; the *kamaru pa,* or emotional body; the *rupa* and *arupa manas,* or vehicles of the concrete; and the buddhic sheath, or seat of the intuitive people.[80]

According to H. P. Blavatsky, there exist seven planes of reality, from densest or lowest to the highest, each corresponding to a state of consciousness. Four of these planes link to cosmic consciousness, and three are of a lower nature; these she relates to the Jewish sephiroth. Max Heindel, a Danish occultist who lived into the early twentieth century, showcased Rosicrucian views, featuring seven worlds that related to aspects of the human being and revealed the chakras as seven red roses. Alice Bailey presented the planes as the physical, emotional (which contain one called the astral), mental, intuitional, spiritual, monadic, and divine. The top four planes are considered etheric.[81] And her cohort Charles Leadbeater proposed seven planes of existence: physical, astral, mental, buddhi, atman, anupadaka, and adi, as well as several related energetic bodies including the physical, astral, mental, and causal.[82] Finally, at least in terms of our discussion right now,

Rudolf Steiner proposed several sheaths of energy interpenetrating the human body, including the etheric or vital body and the astral, with the soul crowning these.[83] The next two chapters will feature more information about these levels of subtle reality.

Did Earlier Peoples Harness Subtle Energy?

Many believe that we explorers of the energetic realms are only rediscovering the same knowledge over and over again in a gangly sort of way. So let's first look back to the Hindus, whose knowledge of science can be seen as similar to our own and was predictive of both classical and quantum physics. Then we'll close this chapter with a glance backward even further, toward people whom we only remember through stories and legends, where we affirm that "ancient" doesn't mean "ignorant." Prepare to journey back in time once again, this time with your scientific textbook in hand.

Did the Hindus Get It Right?

In the ancient Hindu world, the wise divided the concrete world into five elements: space, light or fire, and three states of matter (solid, liquid, and gas) represented by earth, water, and air. These fundamental components are related to five senses and five subtle forms. But everything, regardless of size and shape, had a subtle body in addition to a physical body, composed of abstract qualities that exist in a nonphysical space called *chittakash*. This space is equivalent to mind and is free of physical limitations.

These descriptions are reminiscent of the fields or layers of energy related to the physical body, the emanation of magnetic fields from every electrical body, and the underlying presence in particles and fields of qualities such as color and shape. In the chittakash we find the vacuum, the void from which all things come, and there we find truth.[84]

One important concept of classical physics is that the universe is cyclical, originating with a "big bang" from an earlier universe, which collapsed. Once started (again), it continues to expand until it collapses again. Within this span of time are micro-units of time, tiny "strings" of time strung together

within a theory called the superstring theory. In line with this theory, the Hindu creation stories describe a universe that is cyclical in nature and composed of a series of *kalpas,* or segments of time, threaded together like pearls on a string, building toward and causing continual rebirths. The *Puranas*, for instance, feature units of time lasting anywhere from one-millionth of a second to a span of 311 trillion years.[85]

The ancient Hindus, like classical physicists of modern times, had a mature sense of the bodies dwelling within the universal space. *Rig Veda* seers mapped many of the planets and stars, observed the spherical nature of the earth, and figured out the causes of the seasons.[86] Twenty-four centuries before Isaac Newton, the *Rig Veda* proposed that a force similar to gravitation held the universe together.[87]

A variety of ancient cultures presented the same types of ideas featured in modern science. Ancient Mesopotamian Sumerians and Babylonians proposed a sort of plasma or universal energy from which all things arose, as did sages in Tahiti. The Babylonians also described an event similar to the big bang, as did the Maiana culture in Oceania and the Indian Hindus. Both the Hindus and the Mayans shared stories comparable to alternating or oscillating universes: the idea that the universe is periodically created and destroyed.[88] In fact, the Markandeya Purana specifically suggests that this occurs every 10,000 million years.[89]

The cosmology of India insists that our universe actually has fourteen parallel realities on multiple levels, each intersecting with the current material realm. Here we find the idea of multiple worlds and also the current scientific theory that there are at least ten dimensions.[90] Not only this, but epic histories including the Ramayana and the Mahabharata describe scenes depicting sophisticated airplanes and a weapon that could release powerful explosives over a targeted area, completely destroying it. It is also likely that China and Egypt had the technology to navigate the entire planet, thus suggesting that awareness of these advanced technologies was widespread.[91]

For a quick glimpse at what unsung surprises may lie in the Vedas, consider these renditions from the *Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda*, which have been

modernized.

> O disciple, a student in the science of government, sail in oceans in steamers, fly in the air in airplanes, know God the creator through the Vedas, control thy breath through yoga, through astronomy know the functions of day and night…[92]
>
> O royal skilled engineer, construct sea-boats, propelled on water by our experts, and airplanes, moving and flying upward, after the clouds that reside in the mid-region, that fly as the boats move on the sea, that fly high over and below the watery clouds.[93]
>
> The atomic energy fissions the ninety-nine elements, covering its path by the bombardments of neutrons without let or hindrance. Desirous of stalking the head, i.e., the chief part of the swift power, hidden in the mass of molecular adjustments of the elements, this atomic energy approaches it in the very act of fissioning it by the above-noted bombardment. Herein, verily the scientists know the similar hidden striking force of the rays of the sun working in the orbit of the moon.[94]

Was there really an understanding in ancient India of the chemical elements? Kanada, the originator of the Indian Nyaya-Vaisheshika school who lived around the second century BCE, offered definitions of reality describing an atom in the same way as do moderns scholars, teaching that light and heat are variations of the same reality and also proposing a vacuum that is a form of matter that can only be perceived when light reflects off it.[95]

The role of consciousness also permeated the Vedic world. A concept associated with Vashishta, one of the seven great rishis of India and a figure in the *Rig Veda*, is that a subject cannot be aware of an object unless the two are related. The world itself is only thought, an expansion of the mind, imagination that has assumed the forms of time, space, and movement. In fact, this entire universe is put in our mind by God, the true illusion maker.[96] Herein we find modern principles such as entanglement, the idea of an implicate universal consciousness, and Einstein's observations that an

observer defines reality. There are signs, however, that an even earlier culture might have started it all, laying the groundwork for modern physics.

Was Atlantis the Source of Energy Knowledge?

Plato and others told stories of a people called the Atlanteans, an earlier earth civilization that seemingly harnessed energy in the same way we seek to do through chakra medicine.

We can part the veil of myth—or ancient reality—through the channeled or intuitively provided wisdom of Edgar Cayce, arguably the best-known psychic of the twentieth century. According to Cayce, Atlantis was an advanced civilization that existed in 50,000 BCE. The earliest Atlanteans didn't have solid bodies; rather they existed as thought projections, sharing female and male traits in the same form. These vibrating beings, made of frequencies of pure white energy, took on more dense physical matter as they indulged in greed. Eventually two groups evolved: one that followed the Law of One, the goals of the enlightenment process, and the other that followed the Sons of Belial, or the path of darkness and cruelty. The sons of Belial tempted the daughters of the Law of One into sex and used a group of beings called the "things" as slaves.

The Atlanteans used advanced technology, their tools including a death ray, explosives, radioactive forces, and atomic energy. A first disaster resulted in the splitting of continents. By the time of the second disaster, caused by the misuse of a gigantic crystal, the Atlanteans could travel in every element, rejuvenate the body, and perform astral travel. They could use crystals to channel energy for spiritual, healing, and work purposes.[97] There was obviously an understanding of the nature of energy, whether physical or what we now call subtle.

Whether or not this story is exactly accurate, there are many that mirror it around the world. The Hopi speak of three destructions of the world, flying machines, and massive shields.[98] Stories from other Native American and Asian cultures mirror modern legends. Sunken cities and pyramids have been found in waters around the world.[99] No matter the exact truth, these legends

are a perfect backdrop for ideas that emerged in ancient India and were described in Vedic and other texts—ideas that employ energetic concepts that align with modern physics.

Perhaps we really are merely rediscovering lost knowledge in our quest to understand the nature of chakras and chakra medicine.

To understand a chakra, we must understand both physical and subtle energy, and, as you've seen, subjects in between. After examining a thorough list of energetic definitions, we returned to our core definition of energy, which is information that moves. In apple physics, kicked off by illustrious greats including Newton and Einstein, energy is controlled—seemingly—by rules such as the three laws of thermodynamics. But in orange physics, the land of quantum matters, reality doesn't stay put. Time, space, connection, and just about everything else is malleable.

Various theories that incorporate the orange world but still encompass the apple realm help explain the transformative powers of the chakras. These hypotheses incorporate energy (and chakras) as units of light, sound, fields, and frequency, but also everything from the Many Worlds Theory, or the belief in parallel universes, to the Connective Tissue Theory, the location of energetics within the body's connective tissue. We finished laying our energetic groundwork with a resounding return to Hindu and earlier energy principles and ideas.

The story of energy stretches our minds. The universe—the blades of grass and the stars above and everything and everyone in between—is a story of apples and oranges. It is made of sounds, colors, and frequencies that add up to what we can see and what we can only surmise. The latter category, which we call subtle, is no less real or powerful than what we call physical. In its mysteriousness lies a systematic ordering that is every bit as methodical as that comprising the solid reality. In turning to the next chapter, which presents the various systems of the subtle world with an emphasis on the chakras, we might remember that subtle energy does more than bend our minds. It also describes our soul.

[contents]

Chakras as Part of the Subtle Energy Anatomy

HAVE YOU EVER gotten up at daybreak and looked out the window to see a ten-inch blanket of snow, the uniformity of the white glistening waves covering the landscape?

DR. C. MICHAEL SCROGGINS

Dr. Scroggins, whom you met in the last chapter, posed these questions to me in an email in November 2013. He had much more to say in this email. That uniformity of snow, he pointed out, reveals the truth of all dimensions combined.

What most people miss is that a body of unique snowflakes creates a critical mass that is intertwined but also separated by differences. In the end, however, everything is combined and held together by the frequencies that share the crystalline structures. While the snowflakes are singular, they are a part of the whole, and so is everything within the universe. Nothing is ever exactly the same as anything else—that is an impossibility—but everything is part of the whole, bound together by the strands of frequencies across all dimensions.

Children who grow up in snowy areas understand two facts about snow. First, each crystal has a unique design. Even if it exists only for a moment on a pane of glass, it is an original, a call to "ooh" and "aah." Second, all flakes added together create more than the simple beauty of one fragment. Whether they create a snowman, a landscape, or a backbreaking reason to shovel, there

is a uniformity that gives us pause and makes us appreciate the singular snowflake all the more.

Chakras are individuated vortexes of energy, but each operates like a prism to receive and reflect greater forces. By whatever name a culture may assign them—sephiroth in Jewish Kabbalism, spheres in a Kamitic spirituality, acupoints in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), or lataif in Sufism—these psychospiritual centers are part of a larger system, a family within a greater tribe. The main members of this clan are energy channels, energy fields, and energy centers, including but not limited to the chakras.

In this chapter we will explore the energetic landscape in which chakras operate. While you have been introduced to many of these concepts earlier in the book, here you will learn much more about the interplay of subtle energies in and around the body.

The Big Picture: Meet the Family of Subtle Energy Structures

There are three categories of subtle energy structures:

- Energy channels
- Energy fields
- Energy bodies

Energy channels are like rivers that flow through the body, transporting various types of subtle energy. Their main objective is to manage and direct the distribution of subtle energy, connecting the energy bodies anchored within the physical body with the energy fields emanating from and located around the body. Personally, I picture the subtle energy within these channels as ships bobbing along, with a main destination being the chakras. Pulling up to shore, the ships unload their precious cargo and wait there long enough for the crates to be unpacked and then filled again with treasures destined for other sites. Off go the ships again.

Energy fields are vibrational sheaths that surround everyone and everything that pulses with life. Electricity, magnetism, EMF, sound, and subtle forces

all generate fields, which serve multiple functions such as to protect, filter, and invite communication. These fields don't exist in a vacuum any more than energy channels and bodies exist in a vacuum. The energy channels known as the meridians exchange energy with the human energy field at locations on the skin called acupoints.

Each human energy field is paired with an energy body—a chakra—and some people believe these auric fields are actually extensions of the chakras.

As we examine the energetic anatomy in which the chakras are imbedded, keep in mind that there are many versions of these various systems, several of which you will find featured in upcoming parts of this book.

The Subtle Channels

There are two basic types of subtle energetic channels, which might even be one and the same, simply given different names by different cultures: meridians and nadis. The first term is Eastern in orientation and the second stems from Indian philosophy. Chakras, or chakra-like energy bodies, are featured in both cultures.

Subtle Channels: The Nadis

Drawn from ancient writings, traditional Hindu and tantric energetic models depict a series of energy channels called nadis that run throughout the body. Even Plato knew about the two winding nadis that travel along the spine and, conjoined with the central spinal nadi, form the shape of a serpent.[1] This is the origin of the symbol of the medical profession, the caduceus.

The word *nadi* (which is pronounced "nardi") comes from the word *nad*, meaning movement. In the *Rig Veda* the term means "stream," and that's exactly what the nadis are: streams of energy, both measurable and immeasurable.

Experts most typically describe two types of nadis: gross and subtle. The gross nadis are channels of subtle energy that appear as cords, tubes, or vessels. These are frequently related to meridians, nerves, and cardiovascular and lymph vessels. Experts who link the nadis to the nerves relate each of the

three main nadis to parts of the nervous system, which I'll discuss further shortly. As I will more completely define in the next chapter, the human nervous system is divided into the central and the autonomic nervous systems; the latter is then split into the parasympathetic system—often associated with the vagus nerve and kundalini—and the sympathetic nervous system, which relates to our day-to-day activity and has a left and a right side.

The subtle or nonmaterial nadis of the yogic tradition are channels of *manas* (mind) or *chitta* (the feeling self). The subtle nadis are further divided into the pranavaha nadis, which carry prana (vital force), and the manavaha nadis, which carry mental *skakti* (forces). Though anchored in the body, nadis are usually considered pranic in nature and are said to direct subtle, etheric, or pranic "winds," linking the physical body with the subtle body. Their job is to nourish the chakras as well as the physical body, as is implied through this description from the *Katha Upanishad*:

> A hundred and one are the arteries of the heart, one of them leads up to the crown of the head. Going upward through that, one becomes immortal.[2]

Many of the nadis originate in the kanda, a secondary chakra linked to the first chakra. From here thousands of nadis spring forth to weave a network throughout the body; some believe the network also extends beyond the body. In one tantric system it is said there are 144 chakras, each of which is served by a certain number of nadis. Ancient treatises outline anywhere from 72,000 to 350,000 nadis. Of all the thousands of them, three are considered most important. To this list is added an additional eleven nadis that explain subtle interactions, including those involving kundalini energy.

The Three Fundamental Nadis

Everything from ancient scripture to modern yoga books emphasizes the three most fundamental nadis, all of which closely hug the spine. The central nadi, the sushumna, is multilayered and located within the spine itself. The other two vital nadis, the ida and the pingala, crisscross the spine and interact

with the chakras. These were depicted visually in illustration 4, and here is further description:

Sushumna: A three-part nadi in the center of the spine, the sushumna runs between the first and seventh chakras, dividing into an anterior and posterior branch before reaching the sixth chakra. It is bright red and associated with the tamas guna, which relates to the law of inertia and is considered both void and subtle. As a result, this nadi is believed to be located outside the parameters of time. The sushumna is often considered to manifest the parasympathetic nervous system, which controls our involuntary activities such as heartbeat. It is only activated when the breath comes through both nostrils, which typically occurs during ten breaths an hour, when our breathing shifts from one nostril to the other and at dawn and dusk. As shall become clear in the next chapter, it is at these moments that the kundalini is able to rise through the center of the sushumna. Because the sushumna invites relaxation in the body, dawn and dusk are considered ideal times to meditate; this is when we can best take advantage of the tamas guna. The sushumna is often linked to the Sarasvati River in India.

Ida: Actually a continuation of the vajrini nadi described further on, the ida is considered the channel of the moon and is situated on the left side of the spine. Starting and ending to the left of the sushumna, it terminates in the left nostril, stimulating the right side of the brain. Pale-moon colored, it flows with the nectar of life, amrita, which nourishes the body. It is considered a feminine nadi in that it passes negative, cool, and female energy and relates to the guna of tamas. It also governs feelings, emotions, thoughts, memories, and intelligence. It is sometimes called Ganga in tantric scriptures, named for the Ganges River; unlike the sushumna, it is considered timebound. This nadi is often considered core to the function of the left sympathetic nervous system, although some experts believe it is only a mental channel and most influential when we are breathing through the left

nostril. It is also symbolized by the left eye—often considered the "soul" eye, the one that can look into the world with love—as well as the entire left hand.

Pingala: Sometimes considered a continuation of the chitrini nadi, this masculine-oriented nadi is the channel of the sun and is situated at the right side of the spine, starting and ending on the right side of the sushumna and related to the rajas guna. It ends at the right nostril, from where it stimulates the left side of the brain. Golden-red in color, it contains a deadly poison, *visam*, which is destructive in nature. Through the pingala runs energy that governs vitality, prana, temperament, action, willpower, and artistry. It is linked to the Yamuna River in India. Like the ida, the pingala is also bound by time. The pingala is the main force in the right sympathetic nervous system, but there is disagreement about this. Experts do agree that it is dominant when we are breathing through the right nostril. The pingala also relates to the right eye, through which we examine the world logically and rationally, and the right hand.

Eleven Supportive Nadis

Along with the sushumna, ida, and pingala are eleven other nadis that enable a fully functioning energetic system:

Gandhari: Stretching from the corner of the left eye to the left big toe, the gandhari runs alongside the ida. Its job is to support the ida.

Hastajihva: Running from below the corner of the right eye to the big toe of the left foot, this nadi complements the ida. Together, the ida, gandhari, and hastajihva form the left channel, the three nadis that operate the left sympathetic nervous system; the ida anchors this system.

Yashasvini: Stretching from the right big toe to the left ear, this nadi complements the pingala.

Pusha: This nadi moves from the left big toe to the right ear and supports the pingala. Along with the yashasvini and pingala, it forms the right channel, the entirety of the right sympathetic nervous system that is affixed in the pingala.

Alambusha: Starting at the anus, this nadi ends at the mouth.

Kuhu: Originating in the throat and terminating at the genitals, the kuhu helps the chitrini nadi carry bindu, the essence of seminal fluid, to cause ejaculation in men. (Many esoterics, including Plato, believe that semen is the core of kundalini.)

Shankhini: Starting in the throat, this nadi moves between the sarasvati and gandhari nadis on the left side of the sushumna, ending in the anus.

Sarasvati: Along with the ida, pingala, and sushumna, this nadi starts in the kanda and ends in the tongue. It is said that upon maturity, this nadi enables all that is said to come true. It is also a complementary channel to the sushumna.

Payasvini: Flowing between the pusha and sarasvati, the payasvini terminates in the right ear. The reason that many iconic Hindu figures, including deities and angels, are often depicted with earrings is that a part of the earlobe is linked to the cranial nerves. When a pure metal earring is inserted at this point, this nadi is activated by ions and static electricity from the environment.

Varuni: Between the yashasvini and kuhu nadis, the varuni purifies the toxins in the lower trunk of the body. It ends at the anus.

Vishvodara: Flowing between the kuhu and hastajihva nadis, the vishvodara resides in the naval and is involved with digestive processes, adrenal glands, and the pancreas. Along with the varuni nadi, it distributes prana throughout the body.

The first ten of these nadis are linked to the ten gates (orifices) of the body as well. The associations are as follows:

- The sushumna with the tenth gate (fontanel) and the brahmarandhra

- The ida with the ninth gate and left nostril
- The pingala with the eighth gate and right nostril
- The gandhari with seventh gate and left eye
- The hastajihva with the sixth gate and right eye
- The yashasvina with the fifth gate and left ear
- The pusha with the fourth gate and right ear
- The alambusha with the third gate and the mouth
- The kuhu with the second gate and the genitals
- The shankhini with first gate and the anus

According to tantric theory, at death the soul or vital force exits from one of these ten gates.

Opening Up The Sushumna

Inside the sushumna is the vajrini or vajra nadi, which relates to the sun. It starts at the sixth chakra and ends at the gonads. Colored gold, it is linked to the rajas guna. The vajrini nadi contains flowing nectar, sometimes believed poisonous. The vajrini is considered a sun nadi, whose masculine energy works outside the sushumna through the pingala and inside as the vajrini.

Inside the vajrini nadi is the chitrini or chitra nadi, kin to the moon. It starts in the bindu chakra and ends in the svayambhu lingam in the first chakra. Silver-white, it relates to the sattva guna, which is illuminating, and serves as a channel for kundalini. It is also responsible for dreams, hallucinations, and visions. Since the moon is usually considered a feminine energy, this nadi is sometimes seen as the conveyer of moon or feminine energy inside the sushumna, with the ida fulfilling this role external to the sushumna.

Within the chitrini is the Brahma nadi, which is entered through the *Brahma dvara,* or door of Brahma. This is the opening for the kundalini to enter the "royal road," or *kula marga,* on its way to the crown chakra. The Brahma nadi leads directly to the brahmarandhra. It is not always thought of as a separate nadi but rather as a hollow passage for the rise of kundalini energy (see Illustration 43).

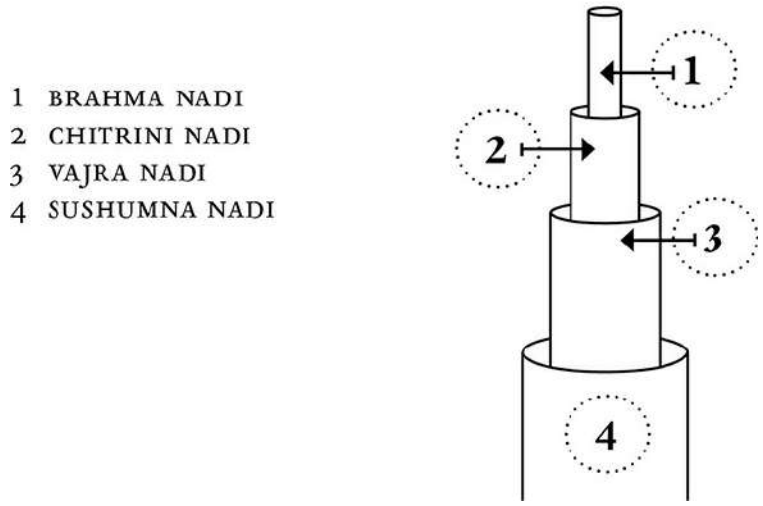


ILLUSTRATION 43—NADIS WITHIN THE SUSHUMNA: There are three nadis within the sushumna: the vajra, the chitrini (within the vajra), and the brahma (within the chitrini). The Brahma nadi, sometimes called "the nerve of God," ends in the brahmarandhra. Considered the haven of the soul, the brahmarandhra is frequently believed to be located in the fontanelle. There are actually several fontanelles open in a child's head. The last one to close is at the top of the head and is called the anterior fontanelle. The brahmarandhra is often affiliated with this fontanelle, often considered the exit portal for the soul at death. Sometimes it is associated with the posterior fontanelle at the back of the head. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

CHAKRAS AND THE NADIS

The chakras and nadis are thoroughly intertwined; in fact, it could be said that the nadis exist to serve the chakras, the storage centers for information activated during a kundalini rising.

As I will more completely explain in chapter 22, the three most important nadis involved in the kundalini rising are the sushumna, ida, and pingala. Once kundalini is activated in the first chakra, kundalini begins to rise up along the spine through these three nadis. The ida and pingala actually cross five times, surrounding and stimulating the chakras through this serpentine undulation, until they meet in the sixth chakra and then adjoin with the kundalini in the sushumna, forming the *mukta triveni,* or threefold knot of liberation. Now entering the sushumna, they separate and proceed into different nostrils while the kundalini, through the sushumna, continues into the crown chakra. The kundalini can take other pathways, however, traveling

through the vajra and sarasvati nadis. As is typical of nearly everything in life, there is more than one way to accomplish a kundalini rising.[3]

Ida and Pingala in Everyday Life

What might knowing about the ida and pingala add to our lives from a practical point of view? How can we best integrate their blessings and power into the everyday?

First and foremost, these two nadis symbolize our feminine and masculine nature. Nearly every culture across time has alluded to the interweaving of both qualities. The wise inner male takes intelligent risks while the feminine sage helps us quit while we're ahead. The masculine warrior courageously alters his world while the maternal feminine mends the frayed edges. The energy coursing through the body is both the feminine ida nadi and the masculine pingala nadi, enabling correct choice and action, drawing upon whichever qualities are needed.

One of the ways to access the assets of the ida and pingala is through respiration. As I outlined earlier, the ida relates to the left nostril and the correlated right brain hemisphere, and the pingala relates to the right nostril and its affiliated left brain hemisphere. Most individuals breathe out through one nostril about 85 percent of the time, which typically means they solely access either the feminine right brain (creative and intuitive) or masculine left brain (active and logical). Every four hours or so we switch, cycling to the other nostril and its related brain abilities. The tissue that enables this switch is similar in structure to the erectile tissue in the penis or clitoris, suggesting an interesting analogy to the Hindu and tantric belief that the ida and pingala travel upward from the first chakra and then, secondarily, the second chakra.[4]

The ida originates in the kanda, which is related to the first chakra and is linked with the left testicle in males (and most

likely the left ovary in females). The testicles and ovaries are representative of the second chakra. The pingala also initiates in this right chakra organ and is connected to the second chakra right testicle and right ovary.[5]

We can also force a change in breath between nostrils—and therefore, the right and left brain hemispheres—to accommodate our needs. One way to do this is to use the Bhastrika Pranayama exercise in chapter 14. The other is to simply block one nostril with a finger on the outside of the nose. We can also concentrate on one hand rather than another (the left relates to the ida and the right to the pingala) or close one eye. The left eye accesses the ida and the right, the pingala.

What are some basic goals we can accomplish through this shifting from side to side? Most yogic breathing exercises, or pranayamas, encourage inhalation through the left nostril to enable a meditative, relaxed state. Several ancient writings recommend accomplishing every important activity with the ida nadi dominant, thus assuring intuitive openness and stability. Also, in the system of Svara yoga, practitioners keep their left nostrils open during the daytime to counterbalance the effects of the sun, which can cause increased violence or dominating attitudes. What might happen if when we were roused or angry, we simply blocked our right nostril?

As well, esoterics often recommend stimulating the pingala when we require physical strength, virility, or speed. Not suitable for meditation, pingala energy can nonetheless purify and cleanse. It is often a beneficial energy to open at night and when dreaming, and it is said to prevent a swing to the lunar temptations of fantasizing and creating delusions.[6]

How do we know that we might want to more actively stimulate the ida rather than the pingala? If we find ourselves lethargic, superstitious, daydreaming, or full of self-pity or grief, we might

want to close off the ida (left) and open the pingala (right). Being caught in extreme emotions, black magic, or addictive tendencies are other reasons. A balanced ida will attune us to our dharma rather than karma and return us to a state of joy. We might close down the pingala if we are stuck in hyperactivity, perfectionism, shamelessness, fanaticism, or egoism. To restore balance is to help us acknowledge that we are not the creative force in our own universe; as the Bible suggests, there is a greater spirit that accomplishes all things through us.[7]

Finally, consider what we might achieve if we breathed through both nostrils, thus activating the sushumna. We automatically perform this activity ten times an hour, thus inviting the rise of kundalini. To consciously inhale and exhale through both nostrils is to invite the awareness of the "now," to transcend time and space and reside within the glory of the moment.

Subtle Channels: The Meridians

The meridians are energy channels that were first described more than five thousand years ago in China. Knowledge of these channels is the basis for medicine in many parts of the Eastern world and, more recently, the Western world.

Meridians form a circulatory system that carries subtle energy (often called chi or ki) around the body, connecting hundreds of reservoirs of subtle energy known as acupuncture points, or acupoints, located on the surface of the skin. The meridians also travel deep into the body, nourishing organs and related body systems.

There are twelve major meridians, which pass energy from one to another in a cyclical manner. While the "brain" of a meridian lies within a physical organ, meridians flow throughout the body and into one another; thus, meridians are truly streaming energies of light.

Each of these meridians is either yin (feminine) or yang (masculine) and enables the body's use of natural elements. If a meridian becomes congested with waste or fails to receive required sustenance, it becomes imbalanced. We then experience difficulties in the corresponding parts of the body, which also relate to emotions and beliefs.

A quick outline of the major meridians, with a few words on functionality, follows:

Liver Meridian: Power plant of the body

Heart Meridian: Development of personality within cosmic order

Spleen Meridian: Distributes energy to achieve tasks

Lung Meridian: Connects to rhythms of the surrounding world

Kidney Meridian: Contains physical and spiritual inheritance

Pericardium Meridian: Collection and release of joy

Gallbladder Meridian: Enables decision making

Small Intestine Meridian: Absorbs and transforms energies within the body

Stomach Meridian: Processes energies received in the body

Large Intestine Meridian: Transmits energies and releases wastes

Urinary Bladder Meridian: Keeps body's energy in motion

The Triple Warmer (or Burner) Meridian: Creates and dissolves energies;
responsible for overall vitality

There are two other meridians that are often considered as important as the first twelve. The conception vessel collects and regulates the body's yin energy, and the Governor Vessel does the same for the yang energy.[8]

Exciting research has substantiated the existence of the meridians. North Korean researcher Kim Bonghan (his name is also spelled Bong Han) published papers in the 1960s that revealed the meridians as tubular structures that contain liquids such as hyaluronic acid and a cushioning fluid,

as well as small DNA granules. Some of these DNA micro-cells seem to grow into adult stem cells, which can be programmed for bodily repair.[9]

In 1991 Russian researchers found that light enters and exits the body at acupuncture points, also running through the body along the meridians. It doesn't do this in other bodily areas. This discovery led researchers to theorize that our body is like a light transferal system, with the meridians similar to optical fibers.[10]

Additional substantiation of the meridian system includes research by French scientists including Pierre deVernejoul, who injected radioactive isotopes into the acupoints of humans and then followed the movements of these isotopes with a special camera. The isotopes traveled twelve inches along the meridians. When the isotopes were injected into blood vessels, there was no movement. The conclusion was that meridians do, in fact, constitute their own system in the body.[11] Even more recent research is showing that the insertion of an acupuncture needle into the skin disrupts the branching of nerves called "C fibers," which alert the body to pain via the neurotransmitter glutamate (neurotransmitters are discussed in the next chapter). These fibers send sensory information over vast distances via Merkel cells, touch receptors near sensory nerve endings that transmit information electrically.[12]

As we shall see in the next chapter, chakras are affiliated with both the chemical and electrical types of signaling that appear to be involved with the meridians. Is it possible that nadis and meridians are linked—that the Indian system at least partially correlates with the Traditional Chinese Medicine system? Several researchers believe so.

Subtle Channels: Parallels Between Nadis and Meridians

Several experts believe that nadis and meridians are the same. One reason for this is the many correspondences between the chakra system and the meridian-based theories found in Traditional Chinese Medicine. In both approaches, life force, by whatever name, is carried through the human body along a complex network of pathways, designated as masculine (yang) or

feminine (yin). Problems result from disturbances of this energy flow, which affect the rest of the organism.[13]

More definitely relating the nadis and meridians is Hiroshi Motoyama, a well-known researcher in the energetic sciences and a Shinto priest. Part of his assessment involves discrediting the traditional link between the nadis and the nervous system; Motoyama asserts that this association is anatomically impossible. Instead, he identifies many of the nadis with the meridians, and chakras with acupuncture points.

To substantiate his assertion, Motoyama underscores that in ancient scripture, the ida and pingala originate at either side of the first chakra and end at the nostrils. The sympathetic nervous trunks do not start in these locations; however, the secondary lines of the Urinary Bladder meridian do: this meridian initiates in the perineum and ends at the root of the nose. As well, Motoyama identifies the sushumna with the Governor Vessel meridian, which starts at the tip of the coccyx, ascends the spine, and reaches a specific acupoint at the top of the head (a point referred to as GV20) before flowing downward to the navel area.

He also compares the Taoist practices of *shoshuten,* or "circulation of light," to tantric yoga. The Circulation of Light practice involves raising ki (chi) from the tip of the coccyx to the top of the head. This is the same practice as is involved in raising the kundalini through the nadis from the first to the seventh chakras. In both cases, the goal involves transforming physiological energy into higher psychological or spiritual energy. The process would also substantiate that the Governor Vessel and sushumna are the same.[14]

Meridian aficionados might find Motoyama's comparative analysis of the nadis and meridians interesting. To formulize this outline, Motoyama reviewed several ancient Indian treatises:

NADI	MERIDIAN
Sushumna	Governor Vessel
Ida and Pingala	Secondary lines of Urinary Bladder meridian

Gandhari	Urinary Bladder on left side of body
Hastijihva	First line of Urinary Bladder
Yashasvini	Also first line of Urinary Bladder
Pusha	Third line of Urinary Bladder
Alumbusha	Conception vessel
Kuhu	Liver
Shankhini	Kidney
Sarasvati	Spleen
Varuni	Large
Payasvini	Gallbladder
Visvodari	Stomach [15]

Meridian and Chakra Linkages

Motoyama also revealed possible links between certain acupuncture points and chakras, both major and minor chakras. A few of his discoveries are as follows:

Second Chakra

Conception vessel 3 in the lower belly is associated with yin energy, and conception vessel 4 is related to kidney reserves. It is located on the midline of the lower belly and is sometimes called "Life Gate Fire" because it can rekindle sexual energy. These two points are located in the second chakra, which is also associated with urinary functions and sensual energy.

Third Chakra

Conception vessel 6 ("Sea of Energy") is two inches below the navel and adds fire to the system. Conception vessel 8, the entry point of chi, relates to a spherical region around the navel and is where prana energizes the body. Conception vessel 12 ("Sea of Nutritive Energy") lies between the rib cage and navel and supports digestion and several digestive organs. These points are located within the third chakra region, which is also affiliated with willpower, assertiveness, and the digestive organs.

Fourth Chakra

Conception vessel 17 ("Sea of Tranquility") is on the breastbone and supports the lungs and heart. The Dingchuan asthma point is found on the back of the shoulders and also nourishes the lungs. The heart chakra, in the same bodily region, serves the same functions.

Seventh Chakra

The energy of the cosmos enters the crown through governor vessel 20, called *Bai Hui*, which means "one hundred convergences." The seventh chakra in the same area is the *sahasrara*, meaning "thousandfold."[16]

Additional models featuring the similarities between the chakras and various types of acupoints are presented in Part 6.

The Energetic Fields

There are hundreds if not thousands of subtle and measurable energetic fields that affect us all. A few of these include morphological fields, which allow us to exchange energy between family members and like-minded species; geofields, which emanate from the earth; the universal light field, or zero-point field, made of photons that surrounds every living thing and is intertwined in the universe as a whole; L-fields and T-fields, which are electrical and magnetic in nature; and the typical character actors with which we're typically more familiar—electrical, magnetic, electromagnetic, and sound fields.[17]

Regarding the latter, remember that every cell, organ, and organ system, as well as the entirety of the body, pulses with electricity. Electricity produces electrical, magnetic, and electromagnetic fields, which means that our bodies generate millions if not billions of fields. These fields form their own gigantic electromagnetic field, and all of them interact with the chakras and the auric field. As well, everything animate and, frequently, inanimate either generates or can produce sound waves. In addition, we interact with the hundreds of other measurable and immeasurable fields in the world, from the earth's magnetic field to solar flares to the electromagnetic activity of cell phones.

There are several other types of energetic fields that also function as energy bodies and sometimes levels of realities. I'll describe a few of these in the upcoming "Energy Bodies in Addition to the Chakras" section.

For our purposes at the moment, this section will explore the auric field, composed of auric fields or auric layers, as well as a unique group of fields called "rays." Both these types of fields have a strong relationship with the chakras and are vital components of the chakra family.

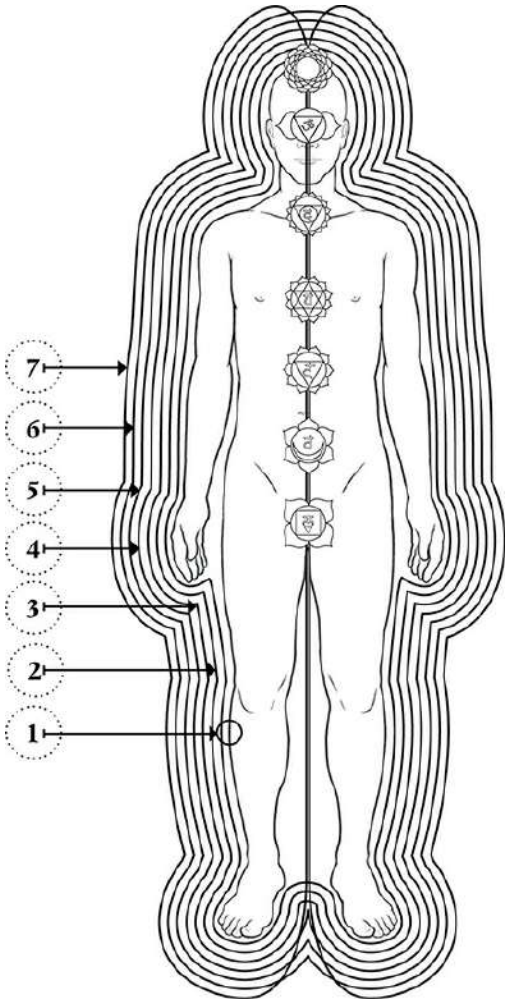


ILLUSTRATION 44—THE AURIC FIELDS: There are many versions of the auric field, but the most popular is of seven fields that emanate from the body in rainbow-color progression. Each field relates to the corresponding chakra. (I believe the first auric field includes and emanates from the skin, which is why #1 encompasses two lines on the illustration.) ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Energetic Fields: The Auric Fields

Auric fields exist around all living organisms, including animals and plants, and apparently objects as well. One of the first images of an auric field was captured with Kirlian photography, using a special film that reveals the energy around a subject. Kirlian photography and more modern photographic methods can potentially determine the differences between a living and nonliving subject, disease states, and emotional well-being.[18]

Of particular interest is the human auric field, also commonly called the auric field or auric layers. Every living being generates an auric field, and since time began, various cultures, including those found in the Americas, India, China, Siberia, and Africa, have described this field as bands of light that emanate from the body in successive frequencies, from lowest to highest.[19] Some scientists, including renowned energy researcher Dr. James Oschmann, believe this field is biomagnetic in nature and, like all fields, is unbounded. The information contained within this field includes data about everything occurring inside the body as well as on the skin, although the field itself starts in or next to the skin.[20]

The human auric field has long been associated with the chakras. Because Western society believes there are seven chakras, most models of the aura assert the same, linking each chakra with its own associated auric field. Each auric field operates on the same frequency band as does its correlated chakra and provides energetic protection, filters information, and emits psychic messages. Programs in the related chakra determine how well its sister auric field functions; in turn, the environment affects the auric field, which then transfers energy into the related chakra. Illustration 44 shows each of the seven layers, which deliver the following functions:

First Auric Layer: Protects and attracts life-supporting energies

Second Auric Layer: Screens and communicates feelings and emotions

Third Auric Layer: Filters and disseminates ideas and beliefs

Fourth Auric Layer: Attracts and repels relationships; communicates about love

Fifth Auric Layer: Attracts, repels, and sends guidance

Sixth Auric Layer: Receives choices and visualizes decisions

Seventh Auric Layer: Connects with spirits and the Greater Spirit; conduit for our personal spirit

Energetic Fields: The Seven Rays

The occult concept of the seven rays appeared in India and the West beginning at least as long ago as the sixth century BCE. Its roots are linked to Vedic and post-Vedic scripture; Gnosticism, which related seven magical letters to seven rays of creative planetary powers and their rulers; the Roman Mithraic mysteries; and even the Catholic Church, which often depicted the dove of the Holy Spirit with an emanation of seven rays.[21] You can see my depiction in Illustration 45.

The best-known introduction to the seven rays was initiated by the Theosophical Society through a series of books published between 1888 and 1952, with Alice Bailey being one of the chief authors about the subject. Other significant contributors include Manly Hall, Madame Blavatsky, and C. W. Leadbeater. Various Native American tribes, however, also carry their own tradition of the seven rays, and the subject now appears in chakra-inclusive practices including Reiki and esoteric astrology.

At the most basic level a ray is a particular force, or type of energy. At another level rays are fields of energy often seen to intersect with or enter the chakras in order to influence our energetic bodies and the physical, emotional, and mental levels of reality or energy bodies described in the next section, "Energy Bodies in Addition to the Chakras."[22]

Many models state that the seven major rays are emanations of the Divine and are governed by higher beings; sometimes these beings are depicted as living rays. Each ray represents a certain quality that produces a specific state of consciousness.

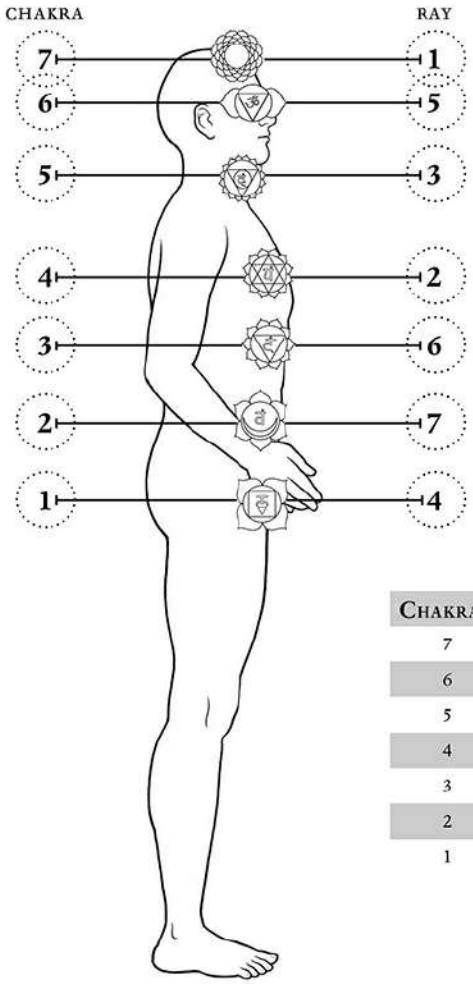
Alice Bailey believed she was in contact with a group of otherworldly masters called the Hierarchy. Bailey maintained that the seven rays are the sum total of divine consciousness—seven radiant qualities enabling

evolution. She perceived the rays as living entities but also as patterns, streams of energy, archetypes, goals, and lights. She saw them as interacting with the chakras and, in fact, influencing the lotus petals within them, each of which she believed was an expression of divine forces. Her outline of the rays is as follows:

Ray	Quality	Color
One	Will or power	Red
Two	Love-wisdom	Blue
Three	Active intelligence	Yellow
Four	Harmony	Green
Five	Concrete knowledge	Orange
Six	Devotion or Idealism	Violet
Seven	Ceremonial magic	Indigo [23]

There have been several theories about how the rays correspond to chakras, an idea generated by esoteric leaders including Madame Blavatsky, who maintained that the seven rays are generated by the seven nerve plexuses, or chakras.[24] One of the more commonly accepted renderings, based on Theosophical writings, is as follows (Illustration 45 reflects this):

First Chakra	Fourth Ray
Second Chakra	Seventh Ray
Third Chakra	Sixth Ray
Fourth Chakra	Second Ray
Fifth Chakra	Third Ray
Sixth Chakra	Fifth Ray
Seventh Chakra	First Ray [25]



Chakra	Ray	Meaning
7	First Ray	Will
6	Fifth Ray	Knowledge
5	Third Ray	Intelligence
4	Second Ray	Love
3	Sixth Ray	Devotion
2	Seventh Ray	Magic
1	Fourth Ray	Harmony

ILLUSTRATION 45—THE SEVEN RAYS: The seven rays run through and support the chakras, which are indicated by their respective symbols on the figure above. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Zachary Landsdowne, former president of the Theosophical Society, analyzed modern theories such as Bailey's against concepts presented in the *Rig Veda*. Seven is a popular number in this scripture, used to describe seven *mares* or streams of consciousness, seven rays of the sun or beings that deliver knowledge, seven sisters, seven rivers, and more. His conclusion was that many Theosophical beliefs mirror those in the *Rig Veda* and that the seven rays reflect these attributes:

- They are divine qualities "stepped down" to purify human beings
- They are seven sequences of ideas assisting our mental well-being

- They affect us on three different planes or worlds
- They divide humanity in seven communities, each directed by a specific invisible guide that governs the related ray [26]

Another interesting presentation is the one offered by Robert Ghost Wolf. From the Lakota and Iroquois lineage himself, Wolf has also learned from several other North American tribes and teaches about our light bodies and matters of ascension. (Light bodies are discussed in the next section.) He asserts that there are seven rays of rainbows, which influence consciousness and spin the dream called life. Wolf believes that at the end times, equated with our entry into the fifth world (we are now in the fourth), these seven rays will be divided into twelve rays, each of which will relate to one of twelve chakras, seven of which are placed within the body. This multiplication of rays occurs as Spirit becomes active in our physical bodies.[27]

I have created the following chart based on Wolf's work:

Ray	Quality	Color	Chakra	Function
First	Leadership	Red	First	Holds vibration of earth
Second	Understanding and knowledge	Sky blue	Sixth	Unites knowledge of the Father and wisdom of earth
Third	Healing ray	Green	Fourth	Vibrates all memories
Fourth	Sun radiation	Yellow	Third	Stimulates growth
Fifth	Scientific understanding	Cobalt blue	Fifth	Embraces order and cycles
Sixth	Devotion	Rose	Second	Invites oneness
Seventh	Transition	Violet	Seventh	Enables transformation[28]

Energy Bodies in Addition to the Chakras

Chakras aren't the only game in town. While this book emphasizes chakras and chakra medicine, chakras interact with many other types of energy bodies. As well, besides the existence of several out-of-body and minor

chakras, there are realms of reality that feature their own unique set of chakras.

The purpose of this section is to present a few of these energy bodies and concepts; further explorations are presented in part 8.

Energy Bodies from the Ground Up

Almost every deep dive into subtle energy will pull up a treasure chest of energetic bodies that serve multiple purposes. Like the koshas, these energy bodies serve three different functions. Each performs three key roles:

- Functions as an energetic field
- Operates as a level of reality
- Interfaces with the body-based chakras, often through chakras specific to the energy bodies

As will become apparent elsewhere in this book, various subtle energy experts outline different energy bodies and ascribe varying roles to them. (I explore the chakras related to these subtle energy bodies in chapter 21's section "Chakras in Multiplex: Ladders of Light.") I believe the variations of these energetic descriptions will make more sense if you have a feeling for how these bodies function. Therefore, the discussions about these energetic bodies in this chapter and the following ones are meant to introduce you to the most oft-told versions of the story. This groundwork will enable you to better understand the systems explored later, especially in part 8, which illuminates these multidimensional cosmologies in context of their authors.

In general, a person's subtle energy bodies actually surround the physical body, also called the "gross body," appearing very much like an auric field. Each is linked to one or more spatial dimensions or layers of reality. These domains of consciousness enable us to reach higher and higher toward an enlightened state, with each layer instructing the one beneath it.

The seven Hindu chakras (or the chakras related to any chakra system) penetrate the energetic layers, yet these energy bodies or domains might also contain major or secondary chakras of their own. Illustration 46 showcases

the most basic presentation of these energetic bodies, the layers of which can be described this way:

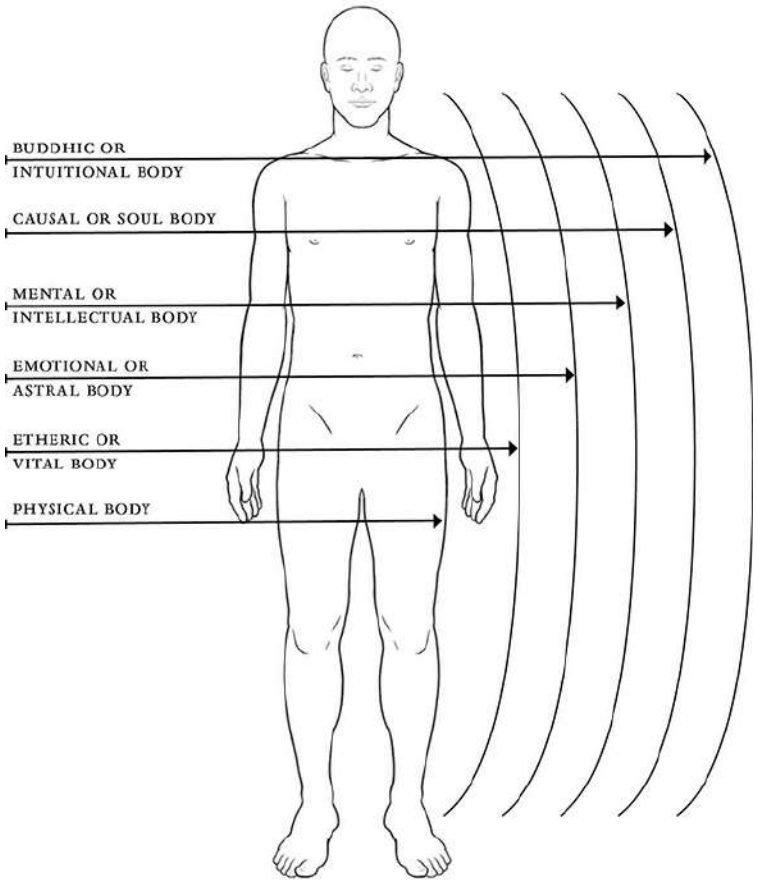


ILLUSTRATION 46—THE EXTERNAL ENERGY BODIES: There are many systems showcasing various ideas about the energy bodies around the physical body. This is a basic depiction. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Etheric Body: This layer, sometimes called the vital body, operates in humans right outside the physical body, interrelating with it and with all energetic systems such as the nadis, meridians, chakras, and fields. It is frequently affiliated with two auric layers and three spatial dimensions. It responds to the physical body but also programs it. The etheric body is often said to have seven energy centers of its own, twenty-one minor energy centers, and several smaller ones.

Emotional Body: This layer is also called the astral body and relates to the emotional or astral planes, which are dreamlike in orientation. This

domain runs an individual's desires, imagination, and psychic abilities, relates to various sensations, and links us to an array of astral or otherworldly beings. It is frequently linked with four spatial dimensions and is organized into seven energy centers, twenty-one minor energy centers, and several smaller ones.

Mental Body: Also called the intellectual body (among other terms), the mental body facilitates thinking, intelligence, and discernment. In some systems it is part of the Manasic Universe or Universal Mind. It is full of light, containing the mental replica of the higher universes. This body covers five spatial dimensions and includes seven major energy centers, twenty-one minor energy centers, and several small ones. There are also several layers to the mental body, which extend from the ability to create individual thoughts to the capacity to grasp great and abstract truths.

Causal Body: Also called the soul body, this body originates our true personality, which incarnates lifetime after lifetime. It also absorbs our essence back into itself after we die. This body has existed for millions of years in each of us and individuates as the soul. As a depository for what we are learning, it is our vehicle for immortality. It occupies five spatial dimensions and looks like a flower with twelve petals.

Buddhic Body: The buddhic body, sometimes called the intuitional body, enables us to transcend the functions of the mind and comprehend the essence of a thought rather than only the thought itself. Through it we are able to distinguish real from unreal. As life is illuminated as a living dream, we are better able to enjoy peace and compassion. We only gain the related state of consciousness once we have made significant progress on our spiritual path, which begins with accessing our intuition. This vehicle has its own five senses: comprehension, healing, divine vision, intuition, and idealism. Residing within are golden light, white light, and swirling mandalas of groups of

light-beings. It holds six spatial dimensions and is elastic in nature, expanding to enable travel beyond the speed of light.

There are dozens of other terms for these and additional subtle energy bodies and planes. For instance, many systems add an atmic body atop the buddhic, which extends in seven spatial dimensions and enables us to incarnate the will of God. Beyond this is sometimes described a monadic body. With eight dimensions, this body focuses on the source of all awareness. The logoic aspect on top of this encompasses the life and activity of billions of beings in our solar system and involves nine spatial dimensions. The specific chakras become less and less organized or necessary as we move into these layers of reality.[29]

The section below describes in simple terms the energy body closest to the physical. Reading this information will help you understand how these energetic layers work, a topic further discussed in the next chapter. And the upcoming section called "Do Subtle Bodies Instruct the Physical Body?" presents a proposal and a discussion that we will further in the next chapter: the idea that the subtle might actually predate, or inform, the physical.

How the Etheric Body Operates

How do the energy bodies described in the previous "Energy Bodies from the Ground Up" section really interrelate? Understanding how one layer operates will prepare you for the deeper explorations featured in the next chapter and in Part 8.

From the point of view of the physical body, each energetic layer enfolding it is composed of increasingly higher frequencies and sustains and nourishes the layer that is underneath it. This viewpoint suggests that, at least potentially, we can be programmed by higher as well as lower energies. (The upcoming "Do Subtle Bodies Instruct the Physical Body?" section furthers this idea.) While the physical, or gross, body—made up of our

organic systems and DNA—relates through our primary five senses, its power supply is the etheric body, which is interwoven through it. Many believe that subtle energy comprises this body; others suggest that this body permeates all layers, including those that radiate outward from it, such as the mental and spiritual body.

At the very least, the etheric body serves as the interface between the physical body and subtle forces. It (and possibly other energetic layers) directly powers the body and links it to the world through the subtle energetic anatomy (the chakras and other energy centers), energetic channels (the meridians and nadis), and the energetic fields (including the auric layers). This etheric body serves as a blueprint for the physical body; in fact, illness and disease might even preexist within it.

This is one of the reasons that one can work on subtle energy to effect a physical change: shift the etheric and other energetic layers, and you can alter the physical body.

The interrelation between the physical body and the etheric body (by whatever name) is revealed through studies conducted by Dr. Marina Shaduri and Dr. George Tshitshinadze. In 2005 they used a special type of photography called a gas discharge visualization (GDV) to interpret energetic fields emanating from the physical body. They discovered that the etheric field is holographic in nature, or composed of a three-dimensional pattern formed by wave interference, which occurs when different sets of waves mix. When the crests of these different waves arrive at the same point at the same time, they make a stronger signal. When the crest of one wave and the trough, or bottom, of another arrive at the same location, they cancel each other out.

Recent studies have shown that meridians carry holographic patterns; DNA molecules control the growth and healing of the

body in much the same way, transmitting and receiving frequencies often measured in millimeters. These signals create interference patterns around the body: in other words, a hologram that mirrors the body's structure. This hologram serves as a blueprint that helps the cells specialize and directs the DNA.[30] Shaduri and Tshitshinadze were able to interpret holograms emanating from the body and accurately diagnosis disease; their process was particularly accurate with cancer.[31] Also apparent was that the holographic pattern relating to a diseased part of the body was stronger than other patterns, as if to reinforce the pattern needed to restore health.[32]

Chakra medicine practitioners necessarily work on patterns—patterns of disease, illness, trauma, and even wellness—attempting to fix unhealthy patterns and enable the body to access healthy ones. For example, I can perceive chronic fatigue as a shortage of red energy in the first chakra and an oversupply of the same energy in different muscle areas, where this enflaming energy causes inflammation and pain. As an energy healer, my job is to help my client figure out the reasons this red energy is displaced and transfer it back to the first chakra.

Do Subtle Bodies Instruct the Physical Body?

The idea that the subtle bodies such as the subtle anatomy, the etheric layer, and so on serve as a physical blueprint can be substantiated by some fascinating science that concentrates on the fertilized egg and asks what instructs the developing embryo: physical or subtle programs?

Korean scientist Kim Bonghan, whom I mentioned earlier, published research in the 1960s proving the existence of the meridians, revealing them as four distinct but interrelated ductal systems or tubules present in all living organisms. He also showed that these tubules develop before other systems in a developing fetus, assisting with the morphological differentiation and

specialization of the organism. These subtle energy structures might tell a cell to become a hair rather than a liver cell, for example.[33]

In a talk delivered to a spiritual science organization in 2010, Dr. Grant McFetridge, founder of the Institute for the Study of Peak States, presented research indicating an even more complex relationship between the subtle worlds and the physical body. His research suggests that just after the fourth cell division, a fertilized egg consolidates into a single "primary cell," merging biological and spiritual functions. Many of the traumas or illnesses that appear later in life are actually caused by epigenetic damage in the primary cell. The epigenetic material is a chemical soup that contains, among other factors, our ancestors' memories and ancestral occurrences. These can be triggered by internal and external events—and, in turn, trigger changes in our regular genes.

Within McFetridge's analysis is a proposal mirroring Bonghan's: meridians are primary cell microtubules. They attach to the cell membrane but also to the chakras, which at this embryonic level are structures found on the nuclear membranes at the junction of the sperm and egg. At this level there is one chakra per triune brain, a three-part concentric structure of the brain. McFedridge also works with additional primal brains, but there are three main ones. Moving from the most developed and outer layer to the inner and most basic, these layers are the neomammilian brain, which includes the neocortex and functions as the seat of thought and most voluntary movement (mind); the paleomammalian brain, which encompasses the limbic system and governs emotions and the autonomic nervous system (heart); and the reptilian brain, which includes the brain stem, midbrain, basal ganglia, and other structures and serves our survival desires (of the body). However, one or more of the chakras might be missing or damaged, which leads to problems.

If the chakras are only partially developed, the chakras inherited from the sperm and the egg fail to join. If they are fully developed, these chakras fuse. At optimum levels, the chakras consolidate.[34] According to McFetridge, the chakras described in the Hindu yogic texts do exist but aren't understood in

connection to the triune brain; therefore, most current chakra theories lack an understanding of the intelligence that runs the chakras. As well, if one heals an aspect of the brain independent of the related chakras or vice versa, the chakra and the physical system will always be out of sync. In other words, subtle troubles lead to physical and emotional struggles.

McFetridge's understanding of in-utero chakric development is quite specific and unusual. For instance, he sees the egg and sperm as having different chakra configurations. And the fully developed chakra system, according to McFetridge, appears differently than it is usually shown. Rather than seven disks emanating from the spine, the mature chakra system should fuse together in a single disk-like shape in the solar plexus area. Two-thirds of the chakra lies below the plexus and about one-third lies above. It is smooth on the edges. We'll take a closer look at McFetridge's system in the next chapter.[35]

Energy Bodies: The Light Body

There are many subtle energy systems that profess a "light body" structured of energy from a higher dimension. Also called the "body of light," this energy body is usually perceived as a layer of the aura and an entire subtle body system that operates at a soul level. Its basic function is to enable a person to hold more light or energy and thereby achieve a higher state of consciousness. Most contemporary light body systems incorporate chakras, the kundalini process, and the energetic bodies we have just explored.

There is historical evidence legitimizing what has recently become a mainly New Age concept. In pre-Christian times, the Pythagoreans wrote about the "Luminous Light Body."[36] This notion has also been attributed to Proclus, a Greek Neoplatonist philosopher who lived around 450 CE. Proclus argued that there is a luminous body that mediates between the soul and the body. Because of this luminous body, the soul can descend into and ascend from the physical body.[37]

Western tradition is replete with additional references to a body of light, a concept that appears in Gnostic literature in the first century. It is found even

earlier in Chinese, Indian, Mongolian, and Tibetan literature and has influenced the development of Hermetics, the Kabbalah, and alchemical philosophies and energetic systems.[38]

One well-known esoteric proponent of this body of light was Aleister Crowley, an English occultist who lived between 1875 and 1947. Embracing Western esotericism, and after studying yogic subtle systems inclusive of the chakras, Crowley described the human journey as involving the passage through a veil of the exterior world to create a subtle body or instrument called the body of light. As one learns how to develop and control this body one gains new abilities, until the entirety of one's life could be called a Body of Light.[39] These days, this body of light is often called the light body, rainbow body, or diamond body.

In a paper titled "Body of Light in the Western Esoteric Tradition," Mark Stavish explains this ancient body through many viewpoints, first by summarizing an esoteric author of the early twentieth century, G. R. S. Mead, and then by comparing them to Jewish Kabbalah ideas. The basic understanding is that there are three levels of light regarding the subtle body. The spirit-body is aligned with the physical body and is similar to the *nephesch,* or vegetative-animal soul in the Kabbalah. The radiant body allows us to experience the "Vision of Beauty Triumphant" while we are still flesh and blood so we may perceive and live in a higher state. Finally, we become pure enough to achieve the resurrection body, through which we live in a glorious and ascended state.[40] Achieving these bodies of light often involves going through complicated purification rituals using altars, symbols, and ceremony.

The more contemporary systems describe the light body as being composed of the chakras, an interdimensional column of light, and the Merkabah, an advanced geometric shape that allows connection to other dimensions. Typically this light body is considered linked to the astral body, although it is much larger than this and therefore located around and above it.

Our light body "turns on" and over time our astral body fully matures. Past life issues carried within our astral body now activate within our physical

body, and we find ourselves struggling with karmic issues. At this point the astral body and chitta, which were previously ephemeral, become structured and crystalize, blocking the light body from shining through. While it is more grounded than when we were young, it is also blocked by our ego. Through meditation and other practices we can dissolve the blocks and clear the astral body. We can now start to manifest our "true selves" within the light body.[41]

Within this system chakras operate as gateways to the light body. They spin freely between lifetimes, which means we can access the light body when dwelling on the nonphysical planes, but they become blocked when we return to a body. However, the Higher Self is considered able to access our "lower self" through the chakras and hence direct our consciousness and activities toward higher things. Eventually the chakras become drawn into the astral body, which in turn incarnates through the etheric body. The astral and etheric bodies include centers of energy similar to the chakras, and these must be clear so the main chakras can function properly.[42] I have met many practitioners who believe that once our light body becomes more active, we begin to develop new chakras. In the subtle energy realm, anything is possible.

Energy Bodies: The Dantians

Grabbing our chakra research passport once more, we find it necessary to return to the Eastern world, where energy bodies similar to the chakras are called the *dantians*. Yet another word often used interchangeably with this term is *hara*. We will examine these energy bodies because the details about them teach us much about the chakras. We will also discuss why they are similar to the chakras; you can find more information about the dantian and hara in chapter 25.

The dantians are another multipurpose subtle energy mechanism. This three-part energetic structure can be seen as both energy bodies and energy fields. The word *dantian* variously translates as "elixir field," "sea of chi," or "energy center," and is also variously spelled da tien, dan t'ian, and tan t'ien. Taoist and Buddhist teachers often incorporate these centers of energy in

their practices. Specific modalities using these bodies include qigong, t'ai chi, and TCM.[43]

The dantians are considered the most important energy centers in qigong literature. There are three of them (see Illustration 47).

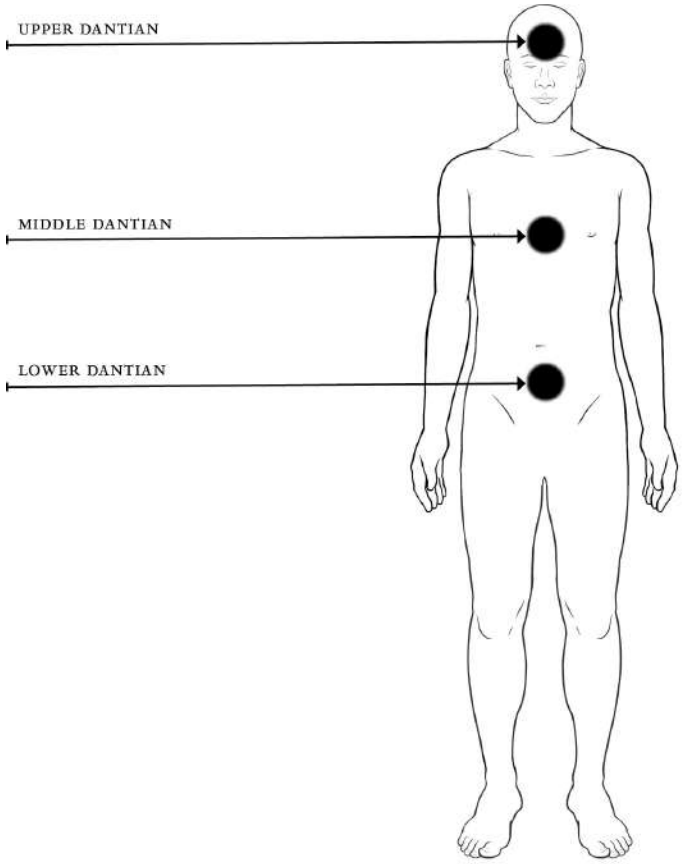


ILLUSTRATION 47—THE DANTIANS: There are three Taoist dantians that are similar to the chakras: the upper, middle, and lower dantians. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

The lower dantian, located in the lower abdomen, midway between the navel and public bone, is the body's center of gravity. It is also associated with sexuality. The middle dantian, level with the heart, stores chi and helps regulate respiration and the internal organs. The upper dantian, between the eyebrows, holds *shen*, the energy of consciousness. It relates to the brain. When the term *dantian* is used solo, it typically refers to the lower dantian, considered the foundational energy center.[44]

The Taoist dantians are energetic storage centers. Their yogic counterparts, the chakras, store energy for the nadis. However, the Hindu chakras also act like intake and export valves.

A practice called "microcosmic orbit" involves circulating energy through the chakras as well as the dantians. You will find it in chapter 25, which also showcases Illustration 69, which compares the dantians to the major and minor chakras. Also shown are comparisons between the chakras and the *danqiaos*, "mini" dantians that compare with the chakras. There are many similar practices, however, conducted in kundalini-based modalities and Eastern approaches, including t'ai chi. For instance, in the latter, practitioners visualize a pearl of chi moving upward from the lower dantians to the higher dantian, in the third eye or pineal gland. At this site of consciousness the pearl is transformed into spirit. After additional years of practice, the "100 meridians" will finally meet at the crown and the spirit is liberated. This is a similar procedure to the raising of the kundalini in yogic literature, with the final goal being *moksha,* or freedom.[45]

A Snapshot of the Energetic Anatomy

Let's return to Dr. Motoyama to construct a picture of the basic components of subtle energy anatomy. While his view doesn't include all the energetic structures mentioned in this chapter, I have added to his ideas in order to present a quick snapshot.

According to Motoyama, who draws upon tantric theory as well as meridian-based theories, there are three basic energetic bodies, each with its own mind. Motoyama limits his list to the physical body and its related mind, which controls body consciousness; the astral or subtle body and its mind, which controls emotions and feelings; and the causal body and its mind, expressed through intelligence. Only the physical body and physical mind operate in the concrete world; the others occupy different dimensions.

To Motoyama's understanding of these three energetic bodies we can add others, as well as related dimensions and specific chakras. Each correlates to a site around the body that is also surrounded by the auric fields, in addition

to other energetic fields. According to Motoyama, each body-mind holds energy centers and energy channels that manage the flow of prana. The channels are called nadis, which are the same as the meridians of TCM, and the centers are called chakras. Under Motoyama's theory, the bodies in the physical realm are the cardiovascular, lymphatic, and meridian systems, and the centers are the brain, nervous plexuses, and acupuncture points. In any dimension a chakra is a control center that runs the exchange between the physical, astral, causal, and other dimensions. Chakras also enable passage between the different *koshas,* or sheaths of consciousness, and they interact with the physical body via the nadis, which number anywhere from 72,000 to 350,000. Motoyama acknowledges, however, as do most texts, that there are fourteen vital nadis and meridian points that relate to specific acupoints.[46]

As I've covered in this chapter, there are additional energetic structures that enter into a full portraiture of the subtle anatomy. Once we have achieved a certain level of clarity, which usually involves a kundalini rising, our higher light-body is activated. The seven rays, or qualities of divinity, interpenetrate with the chakras to assist us with this achievement. The dantians also enable the storage of information that supports this process. Critical to all matters of being human is the fact that all of the major energetic structures—chakras, meridians/nadis, and fields—are present at conception, actually assisting with the design of the body. From the moment the life energy activates our humanity, it is all there: "we" are all "here."

In this chapter you've learned that, as powerful and transformative as they are, chakras function within an even greater subtle anatomy. One partner set is the energy channels, riverways of subtle energy. Amongst hundreds of meridians there are fourteen main ones; amongst hundreds of thousands of nadis there are fourteen main nadis. Some theorize the meridians and nadis are equivalent; some insist they are different systems.

Also associated with the chakras are energetic fields, which include the human auric field. Every auric layer is partnered with a chakra, and together they exchange energy inside and outside of the body. There are thousands if

not millions of other energetic fields that affect our chakras, however, including the seven rays made famous by several esoteric circles. We are truly made of field upon field of oscillating energy, our own swirling dramas interacting with those of others.

And while the famous chakra might like to portray itself as a solo act, there are dozens of other subtle energy bodies composing the self. These often function as various planes of reality as well as energetic fields. In addition, there are energy bodies proposed by other cultures, such as the three dantians of Taoism. As you can see, the lovely analogy that began this chapter—with chakras as individuated as snowflakes glowing together amid an intricate field of shimmering snow—is one way to illustrate the complexity and interconnectedness of the energetic anatomy.

With all the intricacies we have explored in this chapter, I believe that one of the clearest messages to emerge is that we are each a mini universe—a beautifully choreographed composite of subtle structures. Whether we call them bodies, energy layers, channels, tubules, or any other names, each constellation points us toward the heavens, our birthplace. As you turn to the next chapter, prepare to discover equally dazzling truths about the chakras themselves, mirrors of the stars above.

[contents]

The Science and Structure of Chakras

WE LIVE AS ripples of energy in the vast ocean of energy.

DEEPAK CHOPRA

As a swirling vortex of light, each chakra is like a star. And like a star—which doesn't float solo in space but is part of a vast star field—each chakra is only part of an array of luminous bodies and fields that make up the subtle anatomy. Yet each chakra is also a unique energy body with its own relationship to physical and subtle energy as well as its own signature structure. In this chapter I will explore both the science and the structure of these energetic bodies from A to Z.

First, I will examine chakras from a biological point of view—from perspectives including psychophysiological, electromagnetic, sonic, and developmental. I will also explore further chakra subtleties, including their placement as etheric organs that connect layers of reality to the physical body. Finally, I will inspect the individual chakra as a jeweler would scrutinize a diamond, studying its multifaceted aspects including spin, shape, spheres, and more. Throughout, I will support these concepts with as much science as possible. By the time you have finished reading this chapter, you might have arrived at a deeper appreciation of the complex organ that is the chakra.

Chakras as Psychophysiological Organs

The yogic chakra system is typically depicted as a column of energy bodies nourished by three interweaving energy channels—the ida, pingala, and sushumna—with the former two crossing the sushumna and one another at

the sites of the chakras. In Western terms this story depicts the central nervous system, with the chakras each representing a nerve plexus, if not particular vertebrae, and the three main nadis associated with the nervous system. Systems vary as to how they assign the nadis to the nervous system. Frequently, the sushumna is seen as related to the parasympathetic system. The other two nadis are associated with the sympathetic nervous system: the ida with the left side of it and the pingala with the right side. Another system has the ida correlating with the entire sympathetic system and the pingala with the entire parasympathetic system. The chakras form nodes that interact with nerves linked to the various organs, including endocrine glands specific to individual chakras.

This body-based view of the chakras was popularized through the work of John Woodroffe and Charles Leadbeater, among other Theosophists. Hence the chakras consistently have been considered psychologically influential gateways to consciousness and centers marrying the physical and the spiritual.

More recently, scientific knowledge about the neurological and hormonal systems has enhanced our understanding of how chakras might affect us at every level. We can now suggest that chakras affect us through the electrical and chemical functions of the nervous system and that the nervous system's kinship with the endocrine glands spreads the influence of chakras throughout our body.

In order to comprehend the full effect of our chakras, it's important to first explore the neurological system, brain, and endocrine glands. After I present this scientific and medical material, I will make more definitive statements about the relationship between the chakras and our basic biological and psychological functions.

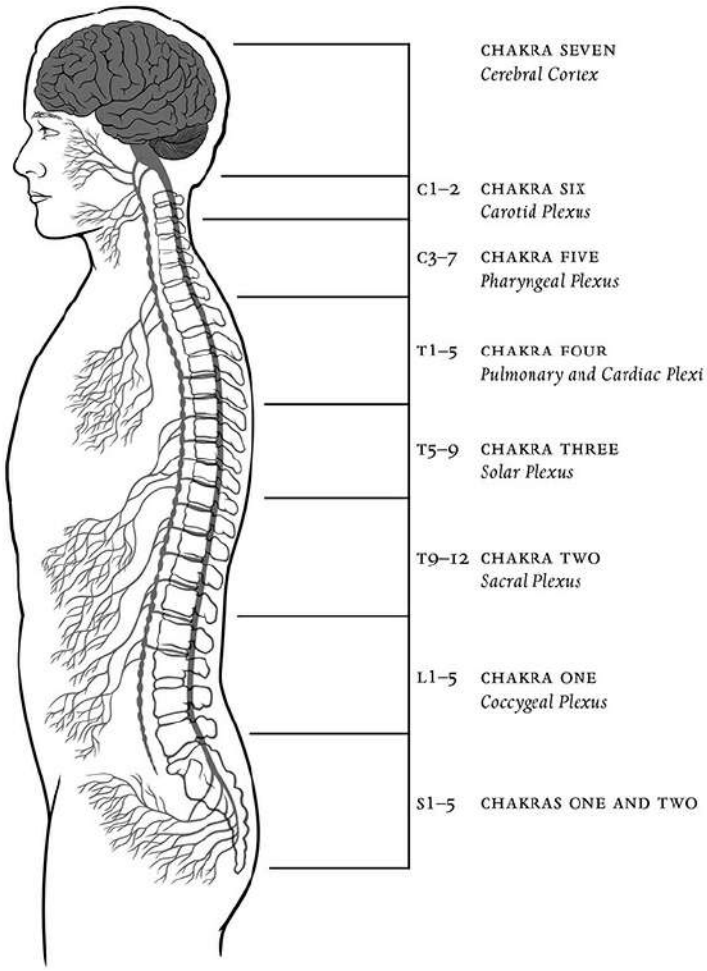


ILLUSTRATION 48—THE HUMAN SPINE: The different chakras are often affiliated with sections of the human spine and vertebrae, as well as the different nerve plexuses. This image describes Anodea Judith's version of the chakra's nerve plexi as described in her book *Wheels of Life*. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Chakras and the Nervous System

BACKGROUND ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

A major player in chakra medicine and the physical body is the nervous system, composed of nerve tissue. This tissue transmits chemical and electrical messages to run all aspects of your body.

The main stage is the central nervous system, composed of the spinal cord and the brain. The spine—also called the backbone, vertebral column, or spinal column—consists of twenty-six bones, including the sacrum, coccyx, and twenty-four vertebrae that are separated by cartilage. The vertebrae are

labeled by region (cervical, thoracic, and lumbar) and number, beginning with 1 at the top of each region. An image of the vertebrae as related to the chakras is featured in Illustration 48.

There are seven cervical vertebrae. The first supports the skull and is called the atlas; the second is called the axis because it allows the skull and atlas to rotate left and right. Directly below are twelve thoracic vertebrae (each of which joins with a pair of ribs to protect the chest organs), then five lumbar vertebrae, the sacral region (consisting of the sacrum), and the coccygeal region (including the coccyx). The sacrum is formed from five smaller vertebrae that fuse during adolescence, and the coccyx from four vertebrae that fuse then as well.[1]

Each part of the spine is associated with a nerve plexus, a system of nerve fibers that associates spinal nerves with specific parts of the body. Fibers within a plexus connect to an area of the spinal cord and eventually reduce into one large nerve. The different plexuses include, from bottom to top, the coccygeal, sacral, lumbar, solar, brachial, and cervical plexuses. Each nerve plexus is like a local postal center that makes sure its associated bodily region communicates with the periphery nervous system, the nerves and ganglia outside of the spinal cord.[2]

The brain controls the body and is composed of three main parts. The brain stem connects the brain to the spinal cord and helps control basic life activities such as smell, vision, expression, hearing, breathing, and pulse rate. The cerebellum is cupped around the brain stem and manages muscle coordination, balance, and voluntary movements. The cerebral cortex is made of four lobes that deal with thinking and higher awareness.

The cortex is also divided into two hemispheres. The left controls verbal functions and logical reasoning. It actually manages the right side of the body. The right hemisphere controls visual functions and is more emotional and intuitive. It runs the left side of the body.[3] You can see an image of the various parts of the brain in Illustration 49 and Illustration 50.

The peripheral nervous system, which includes nerves outside of the central nervous system, is the sensory-based part of the peripheral system. It receives

stimuli, the central nervous system interprets them, and then the motor-based part of the peripheral system initiates a response.

The somatic nervous system manages functions under our conscious control, such as the movement of muscles, and the autonomic nervous system, composed mainly of motor nerves, governs functions of the involuntary smooth muscles, such as the cardiac (heart) muscles. Within the autonomic nervous system are two sets of nerves that relate to nearly every organ: the sympathetic and parasympathetic. These usually work opposite each other, with the sympathetic system preparing the body for activity, stress, and emergencies, and the parasympathetic system lowering activity and allowing digestion and conservation of energy.[4]

The primary constituent of the nervous system is the neuron or nerve cell, which passes information through electrical charges, called impulses, to other cells in the body. These messages often travel long distances in the body. For instance, they will tell your brain that you've stepped on a sharp stone, sending an alert all the way from your foot to the top of your head.

In order to fulfill this communication job, nerves are often grouped in a circuit, conveying information to nerves in their "inner circle" and into other circuits as well. In other words, they have to function like UPS. Packages delivered to a large city are frequently shipped to smaller facilities—and vice versa. These neurological deliveries are electricity conveyed along cell membranes via ions. The brain triggers six trillion electrical signals through neurons every second to regulate thought, movement, and all of life.

The Chemical Signals Of Life: Neurotransmitters

Communication between cells is accomplished by the conversion of electrical signals into chemical signals. These chemical signals are carried by neurotransmitters, small molecules that are able to leap across synapses—the empty spaces between nerves—to carry their messages. These neurotransmitters are extraordinarily busy, as the synapses in the human body outnumber the stars in the Milky Way. On top of that, there are nearly infinite

numbers of messages, including communiqués about pain, hunger, yearning, thirst, emotions, and the like.

Once a neurotransmitter has reached its correct destination, it is able to lock into neural cells, as well as other bodily cells, through receptor sites coded to recognize certain neurotransmitters. These receptor sites are like antennae that are unlocked only by the neurotransmitters that carry the right key. There are more than a hundred neurotransmitters in the brain alone; scientists don't know how many there are altogether. All of them communicate different messages. Once a neuron registers a certain message, it will "kill" that message or send it onward. This choice is dependent on the type of neurotransmitter being received. Excitatory neurotransmitters encourage neuron firing; examples include epinephrine and norepinephrine. Inhibitory neurotransmitters stop the sharing of the message; this type includes serotonin and GABA (see "A Closer Look at Neurotransmitters" on page 432). Certain other neurotransmitters, such as acetylcholine and dopamine, both stimulate and inhibit neurons.

Neurotransmitters are produced inside a nerve through an electrical process using ions. Before a neuron releases the neurotransmitter, the inside of the neuron has a negative charge and the outside is positively charged. Ions maintain this balance. When an impulse is sent from a cell body, certain neuron channels open and the positive ions surge into the cell, making that part of the nerve more positive. Ions start working to restore the resting state, but this influx has already stirred up other parts of the nerve. The neuron might or might not fire, but if it does, negative ions charge out and the nerve fibers become even more positively charged. If this charge passes over a certain threshold, an electrical impulse is carried down the nerve through a series of pulses, and also to neurons that are physically linked with it. If there is no physical link to nearby neurons, the signal is carried across the gap, or synapse, by the appropriate neurotransmitter, which has been stored in a special sac inside a part of the nerve. Once this neurotransmitter fits into a receptor site, it is converted back into an electrical impulse. After finishing its job, the neurotransmitter returns to the space between cells and is destroyed

by enzymes or pumped back into its original neuron's neurotransmitter storage center.[5] What do our neurotransmitters do? Well, just about everything. They tell our heart to beat, lungs to breathe, and legs to get going in the morning. They affect mood, learning, weight, and sleep. Neuropeptides in particular run our emotions, and monoamines, our reaction to stress.

Many people struggle with neurotransmitter imbalances, which can be caused by alcohol, nicotine, and other mind-altering drugs; poor diet, especially the use of sugar and caffeine; environmental toxins; chronic stress; genetics; nutritional deficiencies; food allergies and sensitivities; and candida yeast overgrowth as well as other microbial conditions. Neurotransmitter imbalances are linked to dozens of disorders, including addictions, obesity, migraines, depression, ADHD, panic attacks, chronic pain, weight issues, bipolar disorder, fibromyalgia, hormone dysfunction, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, adrenal fatigue, and irritable bowel syndrome.[6] It is estimated that 86 percent of Americans have imbalanced neurotransmitter levels.[7]

A Closer Look at Neurotransmitters

There are six types of neurotransmitters:

Acetylcholine: In the central nervous system, integral to attention and arousal; in the peripheral nervous system, part of the autonomic nervous system; also activates muscles.

Amino Acids: Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which blocks neurological transmissions and can therefore relieve pain and anxiety; glycine, enabling movement, vision, and hearing; glutamate, involved in cognition, memory, and learning; and aspartate, which is similar to glutamate.

Neuropeptides: Oxytocin, which also operates as a hormone and increases sexual arousal, bonding, and trust; endorphins, which reduce our perception of pain, increase euphoria, modulate the appetite, release sex hormones, and enhance the

immune system (there are at least twenty types of endorphins); and vasopressin, which also operates like a hormone and facilitates learning and memory.

Monoamines: Epinephrine, also called adrenaline, which activates our reaction to stress; norepinephrine, made by the adrenal gland to trigger reactions to stress; histamine, which triggers an inflammatory response; dopamine, which is secreted when something good happens (and is therefore linked with addiction); and serotonin, which is also considered a hormone. Serotonin reduces appetite and sexual behavior and suppresses pain perception. While most of us believe that serotonin is primarily produced in the pineal gland, 80 percent is actually made in the gut. The serotonin in the body cannot pass through the blood-brain barrier, however, so the brain can only use what is produced locally.

Purines: Adenosine, which suppresses arousal, promotes sleep, and performs important activities in different parts of the body such as decreasing heart rate and promoting blood flow in the cardiovascular system. It is also a part of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which provides energy to cells.

Lipids and Gases: Nitric oxide, which has multiple effects, such as reducing inflammation, increasing endurance, activating the senses, assisting the immune system, and improving memory; and cannabinoids, neurotransmitters that activate the same receptors as does marijuana, initially creating relaxation before eventually decreasing concentration and increasing paranoia.

As you can see, neurotransmitters run nearly every aspect of our life. You will discover the role they play in the chakra-kundalini dance in the next chapter.[8]

The "Second Brain"

One particular part of the gastrointestinal area is of increasing interest in medical science as well as chakra medicine. Located between the anus and the esophagus is a mass of neural tissue filled with vital neurotransmitters that determine our mental and physical health. Known as the enteric nervous system, this area is often called the "second brain" because it contains even more neurons than do the "head brain" and the peripheral nervous system combined. In fact, it is composed of one hundred million neurons, which are located on sheaths that measure about nine meters end to end. Its nerve cells are bathed in and influenced by the same neurotransmitters we find in the brain, many of which are the neuropeptides that create everything from mood to emotion. These neuropeptides can "turn on" in the gut in reaction to stimulation in the brain—responding to whether we're scared or not, for example—but can also operate independently in the second brain, responding to drugs, foods, microbes, other neurotransmitters, and more.

These nerves are formed during fetal development from the same type of tissue that makes up the central nervous system. Revealing how busy this second brain is, more than 90 percent of the fibers in our most communicative nerve, the vagus nerve, which runs from the brain stem to the abdomen, are busy carrying messages from the second brain to the head brain, while the brain talks to the second brain through various command nerves.

This second brain can operate autonomously from the central nervous system. In fact, it determines about 80 percent of our immunity and most of our emotional health, based on factors including diet and our reaction to stress. Neuropeptide synthesis occurs in the enteric nerves as well as in the gut-associated lymph system, which means that a number of our immune cells, including lymphocytes and macrophages, respond to these enteric-related neuropeptides. As an example of how important this second brain is, we've only to discuss serotonin, which determines our mood. Doctors often prescribe selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as Prozac for depression, which impacts the head-brain. However, 95 percent of our

serotonin, a dual-operating neurotransmitter and hormone, lies in the bowels. Prozac doesn't work on gut-induced depression.

Serotonin in the second brain is also complicit in diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome, which is partially caused by too much serotonin in the bowels. Dozens (if not hundreds) of other diseases are related to the second brain as well. For instance, according to one study, inhibiting the release of serotonin from the gut counteracts osteoporosis. Autistic children have elevated levels of gut-produced serotonin, the presence of unhealthy gut bacteria, and a lack of healthy flora.

Even mental illnesses might have a root in the second brain. For example, one of the more promising treatments for obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in children is the use of an antibiotic normally prescribed for tuberculosis. This medication, D-cycloserine, is a nonabsorbable antibiotic and strips the gut of certain bacteria that seem related to OCD. This antibiotic also seems to affect cellular receptors in the brain related to anxiety.[9] Of the neurotransmitters, neuropeptides deserve special attention. Many neuropeptides are released from the hypothalamus and are part of a larger group of chemical signals called peptide hormones that affect the endocrine or hormone system. Typically, neuropeptides send information out and relay it back again to their original cells, creating a net of electrical activity with neighboring cells. They can also work with waves of peptides to create hormonal signals inside the brain and reprogram neural networks throughout the body. Neuropeptides bind to a cell's surface; though they don't enter the cell, they are more powerful than other neurotransmitters. While their quantity is smaller than those of neurotransmitters, they are found not only in the head brain but also in the second brain.

There are many differences between neuropeptides and their fellow neurotransmitters. One main distinction is that while neurotransmitters often come from a neuron area called the dendrite, neuropeptides have many origination points within the neuron. This makes it hard to resist the analogy that neuropeptides are like kids on Facebook, posting messages that go near

and far. Other neurotransmitters are comparable to kids standing in a row whispering secrets, one to the other.[10]

Because neuropeptides operate throughout the body, they are proof positive that the mind is not only located in the brain but is spread throughout the body like a complex multidimensional net. The main pioneer proving this point is Dr. Candace Pert, who was a well-known author and speaker on the mind-body phenomenon and an internationally recognized pharmacologist.[11] Dr. Pert discovered that many cellular receptors and neuropeptides correlate specifically to certain emotions and states of mind, such as bliss and depression. These receptors, where memory and information are processed, are found on every cell in the body. For our understanding of subtle energy, it's important to know that the cellular receptors aren't just lock and key. They vibrate while pumping ions and information through cellular membranes, creating and joining electrical vibrations.[12] These vibrations, in the form of EMF or frequencies surrounding information, flood through us but also project around us. This means that our cells not only send vibrations but can receive them from others as well, establishing the basis of empathy and even ESP.

Dr. Pert also made another discovery in relation to neuropeptides—something that wraps chakras, the central nervous system, and the second brain into one package.

Chakras And Our Neurology: The Scientific Picture

Besides uncovering the importance of neuropeptides, Pert also discovered that the peptides and receptors processing emotions are clustered at chakra points. The chains of nerve bundles on either side of the spinal cord, each laden with peptides, compared almost exactly to the location of the chakras.[13]

This discovery reveals the chakras as mini brains, at least in terms of neurological functions: nodes of electrical and chemical activity that can receive, process, and distribute body-mind information. Looping back to our discussion of the spine, we now see that chakras are, in fact, related to nerve plexus and vertebrae areas, and the body itself is neatly divided into left and

right halves. The right-brain hemisphere is intuitive, creative, and receptive, and controls the left side of the body. The ida also relates to the left side of the body and the left channel of the sympathetic nervous system; in Eastern medicine, the left half of the body is considered yin, or feminine. The left-brain hemisphere is logical and action-oriented and manages the right side of the body. It is linked to the male pingala nadi, the right channel of the nervous system; according to Eastern medicine, the right half of the body is yang, or masculine.[14]

We also find that the chakras are related to the network of cells affected by neuropeptides and other neurotransmitters. Hence a chakra is physiologically based but is also related to the neurological functions that create and respond to emotions and physical-life stimuli.

The chakra medicine functions of the first, second, and third chakras also relate to the second brain. Found in the genital and hip area, the first chakra relates to primal concerns and our "flight, fight, or freeze" reactions. Located in the abdomen, the second chakra governs the intestines and is considered the center of feelings. Managing the solar plexus, the third chakra reigns over the remaining digestive organs and processes thoughts. Together, the second chakra (feelings) and third chakra (thoughts) form our emotions. These three chakras obviously relate to the second brain.

Trauma incurred physically or emotionally will not only block the body but also become imprinted in the related chakra, degrading the performance of the entire body and subtle anatomy. Remember: neuropeptide receptors, and neurotransmitter receptors in general, are always ready to receive information from other neurons. When the system requires assistance from a specific chakra, the plexus in that chakric area releases neuropeptides to other chakra areas, calling for help from the entire organism.[15] For instance, if the third chakra needs to be engaged so you can focus on an exam, it will receive a rush of assistance, closing off some of the other psychophysiological functions to achieve that result. In general, the lower three chakras will operate as their own unit and the top chakras as their own unit, with the heart mitigating between.

The Brain And The Chakras

The chakras also relate to specific different parts of the brain, looping it into our biological portraiture of the chakras. In the book *The Body Has a Mind of Its Own: How Body Maps in Your Brain Help You Do (Almost) Everything Better*, authors Sandra and Matthew Blakeslee link each chakra with a part of the brain.[16] Illustration 49 shows the location of many of these brain parts featured in their system, which is described as follows:

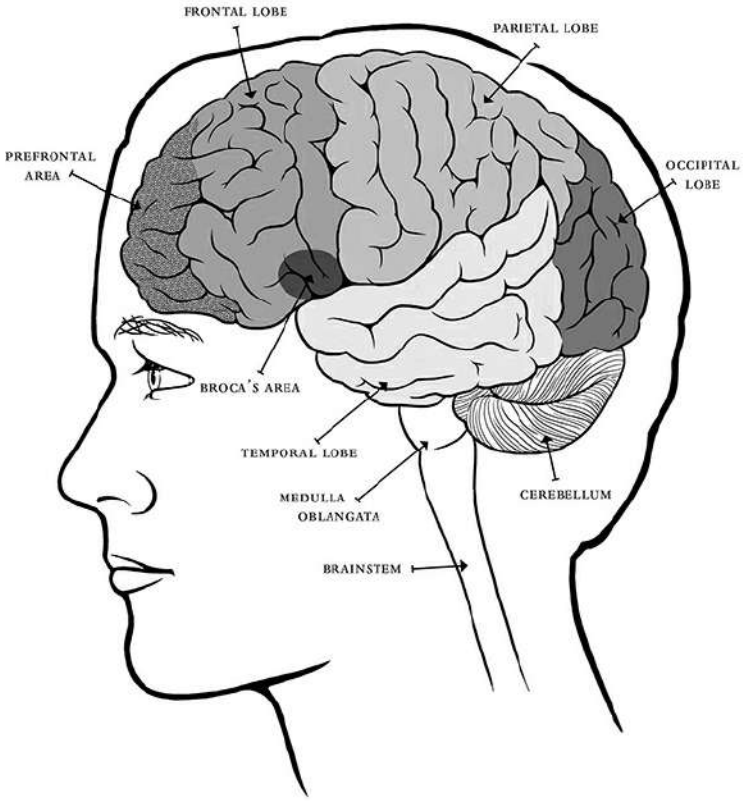


ILLUSTRATION 49—PARTS OF THE BRAIN: Parts of the brain have been affiliated with different chakras. For instance, the brainstem equates with the first chakra; the cerebellum with the second chakra; the parietal, temporal, and occipital lobes with the third chakra; Broca's area with the fifth chakra; most of the frontal brain with the sixth chakra; and the prefrontal cortex with the seventh chakra. Other parts of the brain are shown here, as they will be referenced later in this book. (The fourth chakra is often affiliated with the thalamus and hypothalamus, which are shown in Illustration 50.) ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

First Chakra: The brain stem, regulating involuntary bodily functions.

Second Chakra: The cerebellum, also called the reptilian brain for its governance of self-protection and human drives such as sex and aggression. It specifically regulates muscle tone, coordinates movement, maintains posture and balance, and stores memories for learned responses.

Third Chakra: The parietal, occipital, and temporal lobes, which work with the limbic system to deal with touch, pressure, and pain; aspects of vision; and perception of hearing and memory, respectively; also enables the sense of time and space, and therefore action.

Fourth Chakra: The thalamus region, including the hypothalamus, which orchestrates the brain, circulating hormones and allowing deliberate movement.

Fifth Chakra: Broca's area, which produces speech.

Sixth Chakra: The frontal brain, minus the prefrontal cortex. Governs visual and verbal inputs as well as planning, problem solving, and emotions.

Seventh Chakra: The pre-frontal cortex, which relates to our higher states of consciousness and concentration, free will, and altruism.[17]

Chakras and the Endocrine System

Armed with an understanding of the chakras and the neurological system, it's equally important to comprehend the chakras' link with the endocrine system. And because the endocrine system is interwoven with the circulatory system, it, too, must be integrated into the picture.

Backgrounder On The Endocrine System

We can't completely separate the nervous system from the endocrine system, as these two friends work together to coordinate bodily activities. Both systems use chemical signals to communicate from cell to cell, maintain bodily homeostasis, and link parts of the body together. They also use many of the same organs, signaling mechanisms, and transmitters, although they assign the latter different tasks. The endocrine system, however, employs

hormones through the circulatory system that act on target cells throughout the body. These cells feature receptors that bind to signaling molecules and then respond to them.

Nervous and endocrine signaling can target the same or different cells, but compared to the nervous system, the endocrine system is slower. This is because blood is slower than the electrical flow of the nervous system.[18] Nonetheless, hormones are often "king," determining everything from mood to activity.

The endocrine system comprises the glands of the body that produce hormones, but it also includes the hormones themselves, chemicals that are constantly circulating through the body. Showing the true interdependency of our two featured systems, these glands are actually controlled by the nervous system, chemical receptors in the blood, and hormones produced by other glands. The job of a hormone is to ensure balance in the body in nearly every area, including reproduction, sexual development, glucose and mineral homeostasis, heart rate, cellular metabolism, heart function, and digestion. Illustration 8 shows the location of the major endocrine glands.[19]

A hormone can either pass through cells or along the plasma membranes of cells. It "hunts and seeks" until it encounters a receptor that it fits into. It will ignore other receptors. Some hormones are called tropic hormones, which can trigger the release of a hormone in another gland. Many hormones produced by the pituitary are tropic hormones.

Hormones are regulated in many ways. Primary is the action of the hypothalamus, which can release stimulating but also inhibiting hormones, starting up activity or stopping it inside the rest of the body. Tropic hormones can regulate other hormones throughout the body but are dependent on factors including nutrition. For instance, if your diet is lacking in iodine, your thyroid can't produce the right hormones. The other issue is exposure to hormones. Cells exposed to high levels of hormones for a long time eventually reduce the number of receptor sites, leading to reduced hormonal control of that cell. This is one of the reasons nutritional experts are concerned about the presence of added hormones in foods, especially meat.

There are two types of hormones: water soluble and lipid soluble. Water-soluble hormones can be peptide- or amino acid–based and include insulin, epinephrine, HGH, and oxytocin. They are soluble, or broken down in water. They can't pass through cellular plasma membranes and so are limited to linking on external receptor molecules, thereby triggering a reaction inside the cell. Lipid-soluble hormones can be stored in fat. Estrogen, for instance, can be dissolved by fat tissue but also stored in fat tissue. These hormones can pass through the cellular membranes and bind to receptors inside the cell nucleus. They include steroid hormones such as testosterone, estrogen, and more. Because they pass into the cell, they can control cellular functions, often triggering genes in the DNA.[20]

Chakras Are Hormonal

Based on the interaction between the neurological and endocrine systems, we can see that the chakric relationship with the endocrine system is at least equal to the relationship it enjoys with its neurological neighbor. Serena Roney-Dougal, who holds a PhD in parapsychology, believes that the endocrine system is actually the main aspect of the chakric system; she also theorizes that the autonomic nervous system is equivalent to the nadis.[21]

Roney-Dougal recognizes that most energetic systems link each chakra to a different endocrine gland. Her own ideas differ from those presented in part 2. For instance, she connects the pineal gland with the sixth chakra and the seventh chakra with the pituitary gland, rather than the other way around. She also connects the first and second chakras with the gonads, the adrenals with the third chakra, the breasts with the fourth chakra, and the thyroid with the fifth chakra. The reason I am relaying this information is that she tracks the chakras' physical locations to these particular endocrine glands rather than the nerve plexuses.

One of the benefits of this strategy is that hormone activity explains many important but also rare chakric functions. For instance, the pineal gland (which Roney-Dougal relates to the sixth chakra) produces hormones that touch nearly every part of the body but also psi activity, one of the more

famous—or infamous—outcomes of a kundalini rising. According to Roney-Dougal, the pineal gland produces a number of hormones and neurotransmitters, including peptides, that invite psychic experiences. Specifically, the MAO inhibitors prevent the breakdown of serotonin and an accumulation of amines called beta-carbolines, which can cause hallucinations, depression, or mania. One particular neurochemical, pinoline, seems to stimulate psi experiences in our sleep. Melatonin, another hormone produced by the pineal gland, operating in conjunction with the hypothalamus, is also of interest in the discussion. When present later in life, as it is among yogis, it bolsters health, increases longevity, and improves the function of the other glands. It also regulates activity at the other traditional chakra sites.[22]

There are dozens if not hundreds of other theories about the chakras and the endocrine glands. Dr. Earlynne Cheney, a twentieth-century American mystic, believed the glands were the physical counterparts to the chakras. Theosophist Adelaide Gardner thought the glands were influenced by the chakras. Alice Bailey testified that the glands were the best organs to work with, as they interconnected the chakras and the dense physical body.

Of course, the chakras could be physically linked with both the nerve plexuses and the endocrine system, as we've already seen that the neurological system and endocrine glands are interdependent. Because of the endocrine system's dependency on the cardiovascular system, which interacts with the connective tissue and therefore the meridians, we are now looping the entire body together through the chakras.

In terms of our two friends the nervous and endocrine systems, we can see the benefit of chakras interacting with both. The nervous system enables quick responses, allowing high-speed reactions. By comparison, the endocrine system is lazy. Its slow-starting and longer-lasting reactions allow consistent change.[23] Both functions enable the chakras' effectiveness.

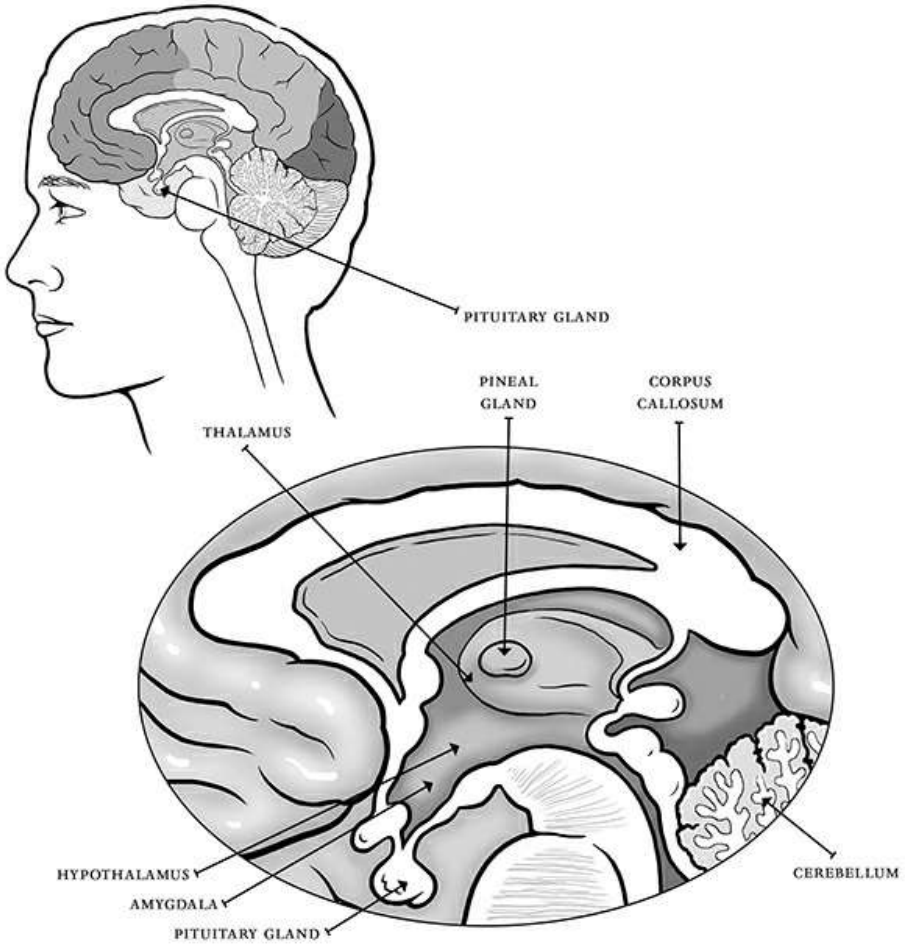


ILLUSTRATION 50—CLOSE-UP OF THE GLANDS: Chakra functions are integral to glandular functions, and vice versa. For instance, the first chakra interacts with the amygdala, which is part of the "flight, fight, or freeze" limbic system. The seventh chakra is linked to the pineal gland and the sixth chakra to the pituitary gland. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Chakras and Fields and Frequencies

It's tempting to remain Newtonian and analyze the chakras mainly in terms of receptors, ions, neurotransmitters, and hormones. After all, these concepts are measurable (to some extent). To explain chakras as nodes and glands, connection points, and psychological indicators is to remain on relatively stable ground. However, life isn't only about the firing of chemical signals. It is about all forms of energy, as are the chakras.

As we've already determined, the human body is composed of oscillating fields of energy, the basis of which is frequency. Chakras operate the same way, although they exist on multidimensional levels of reality. To comprehend a chakra most fully is to examine it as a series of fields and frequencies, understood as electromagnetic expressions or light and sound. It is to reduce it to frequency and then examine it within different layers of reality, each composed of different energies. In the end, chakras can be perceived as bands of frequency interacting both internally and with external fields.

Backgrounder on Fields and Frequencies

Every part of us constantly transmits energy. This energy can be perceived in many forms, but fields are probably the most important way we stay "organized."

While our bodies are in constant flux, we are always generating EMF that is essential to our core programming, as well as harmonic frequencies that serve us. The trillions of atoms in our bodies are only one set of "harmonic oscillators" that emanate subtle EMFs and our most fundamental frequencies. Some of the fields we generate might be very weak, but they can add up to stronger fields that can sometimes be measured.

At one level, the fields and frequencies our bodies generate are indicative of our biological state. Ionization, which involves charges moving across membrane walls, accounts for many of the short-distance waves, as do changes that occur within a cell. Included in the formula are thousands of other biological activities, among them the electricity involved in nerve conduction. As we've been proving, however, emotions, thoughts, and other psychological factors are also based in biology and can be communicated through the various fields generated in and by the body.

As Dr. Scroggins points out, even chemical reactions, which involve transmitting energy by acting on cellular receptors, give us only a partial understanding of what is occurring. The rest of the story is that these interactions produce frequencies that activate similar frequencies. Remember

our discussion in chapter 19 in the section "Putting It All Together: A Brave New Model"? Frequencies have certain formulas, and so do the energies connected to them. Newly activated frequencies actually stir up a chemical response, causing cells to take in energy and produce waste. The real activity and driving force are the energy pulse and dielectric effect in the form of frequencies. In fact, at one level, explains Dr. Scroggins, we don't really even need energy exchanges or energy transfers. We only need to vibrate the correct formula of a frequency to create a response.[24] Of course, we mainly function on a subconscious and unconscious basis. Most of us have no idea what is occurring in these subterranean aspects of ourselves, especially on the subtle energy level. That's one of the reasons that chakra medicine practitioners use intuitive and meditative techniques to decipher subtle energy matters. If we can become aware of the deeper levels of interactions within ourselves, we can shift frequencies to make a desired change.

When a frequency outside of us matches our fundamental frequency—which we could also think of as our harmonic frequency—the result is resonance, which causes an amplification of the vibrations. This is how we connect to others; it is what occurs when we feel "in tune" with someone else. Likewise, we will be negatively affected by frequencies that are in discordance with our fundamental frequency. When an illness occurs, for example, the natural fluctuations of charge are disturbed. The cell must now divert some of its power and energy into combating the cause of the disturbance, such as an invasion of microbes. There is a reduction in the power available to perform normal cellular functions and a resulting decrease in the frequencies emitted by a cell. Microbes also emit frequencies that further distort the body's micro and macro fields. These distorted frequencies can potentially be "picked up" in the surrounding biofields, including the chakras and auric fields, for diagnostic purposes.[25]

From the perspective of the electromagnetic spectrum of light, there are certain numbers of measurable fields, as is apparent in Illustration 51. This number is actually a small fraction of all fields. For instance, visible light is only 1/1000 of a percent of the spectrum. Much of the color generated by the

electromagnetic spectrum and the energetic anatomy falls outside of the range of visible light.[26]

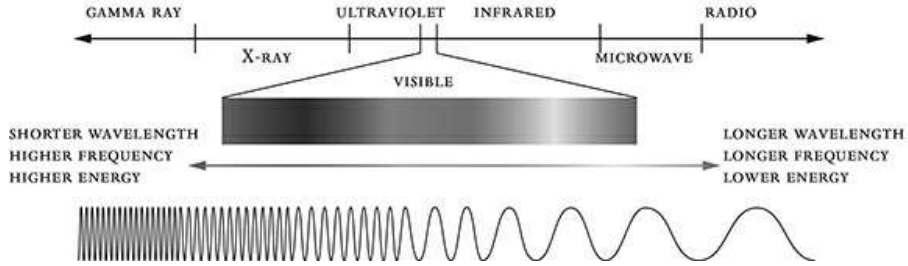


ILLUSTRATION 51—THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM: Chakras reflect a higher vibration of visible light, which is only a small part of the entire electromagnetic spectrum. Their effects, however, spread throughout all known and unknown radiations, which are measured as waves or frequencies. This illustration shows a comparison of wavelength, frequency, and energy for the electromagnetic spectrum. (See the insert for a color version of this comparison.) ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Scientists including Beverly Rubik, renowned for her work in biophysics and frontier medicine, focus primarily on the electromagnetic aspects mainly because the most research has been done in this area. Researchers using the electrocardiogram (ECG) and the electroencephalogram (EEG) have measured both the electrical and electromagnetic activity of the heart. Other tools, including the magnetocardiogram (MCG) and superconducting quantum interference devices (SQIDs), have been used to track the body's magnetic fields. Still other tools have been used to detect infrared radiation and biophotons.

Measuring Chakras' Fields and Frequencies

One of the more interesting testing devices Rubik remarks upon also clues us in to the chakras: a high-voltage electrophotography process called the gas discharge visualization (GDV) camera, developed by Konstantin Korotkov in Russia in the 1990s. An updated form of Kirlian photography, the GDV camera is electrically high frequency and high voltage and has been used in conjunction with a charge-coupled device (CCD), which is able to detect photons emitting from fingertips. A computer analyzes the findings of these combined technologies.

Results revealed GDV images of the biofield plus additional effects discharged from each of the five fingers. The chakras and meridians are thought to contribute to these effects, as do the physical fields of an organism, skin conductivity, acupoints, and more.[27]

This study and others must take a bow to one of the first of its kind, which involved five years of research conducted by Valerie Hunt, Wayne Massey, and other scientists through the University of California in the 1970s. The so-called "Hunt studies" were based on recordings of electromagnetic radiation from the body resulting from rolfing, an intense massage technique that incorporates manipulation and restructuring of deep tissue.

The equipment these researchers used included telemetry, a radio broadcasting system that interfaces with the body's electrical activity. The resulting information was analyzed by procedures that measured wave shapes and frequencies and noted regular high-frequency electrical oscillations coming from the seven basic chakra areas. The frequencies, converted to colors, were consistent with the typical coloration assigned the chakras, although the actual frequencies measured in cycles per second (cps) were far higher vibrationally than those emanating from other parts of the body. For example, the heart organ has a frequency of 250 cps, yet the chakra readings fell in an electromagnetic band between 100 and 1,600 cps, which validates the esoteric assumption that chakras, as well as other subtle systems, operate at higher frequencies than we typically measure.

Hunt also studied the relationship between the chakras and the human auric field, which is composed of several separate fields or layers, each of which has been esoterically related to a specific chakra (such as the first auric layer relating to the first chakra). Each layer of the human auric field was associated with a different wave pattern, which in turn can be described as a color. The colors of the different auric layers corresponded with the colors usually associated with the correlated chakras. Hunt also noted that the chakra energy flowed both toward chaos and toward order.[28] In support of the goal of chakra medicine practices—to enable higher and higher states of

enlightenment—Hunt's studies discovered that the highest frequencies were generated by individuals who were psychics, healers, or on a spiritual path.

More recently, Hunt has performed additional studies of the auric field, which she defines as the electromagnetic frequencies that pass through the body as waves of energy. She discovered that when this field emanated colors such as white light, the frequency signal was over 1,000 cps. Her hypothesis is that the field's frequency is a subharmonic of an original frequency that is in the range of many thousands of cycles per second, as well as a subharmonic of the original subtle energy of the chakra.[29] One of the problems in figuring out the exact frequencies of chakras and auric fields has been that modern equipment can't measure truly high vibrations, anything faster than what EKG and EEG machines can track. Consequently, Hunt has developed an auric measurement instrument, called a Bioenergy Fields Monitor, that can detect frequencies a thousand times faster than those measured by traditional instruments. Her auric readings can now pick up wavelengths cycling up to 750,000 cps and reveal that different diseases have different signature patterns, as do individuals. Emotional and physical health results in smooth, shallow, even, and gentle L-fields or electrical fields, and problematic states show up as deficient or hyperactive energetic patterns. These irregularities will appear even before physical symptoms and can sometimes be shifted by positive emotional changes, which she believes is the apex of healing and can produce electromagnetic change.[30]

Hunt's research in this and other areas has led her to believe that diseases are caused by factors different from the reasons given in traditional medicine. For instance, she has determined that cancer is created by the body's inability to adequately deal with viruses causing oxygen deprivation, inflammation repressing the immune system, and imbalanced patterns in our energy field, which includes the chakras.[31]

Her research also concentrates on a different type of electromagnetic wave from auric field waves. I introduced this form of electromagnetism in our last chapter as a scalar wave, although Hunt calls it a bioscalar wave. The principle is that if energy is introduced on a straight line from two energy

sources of the same frequency at the same time, these actions create standing energy or a standing wave, which isn't a wave at all; rather, it is an energy that occupies space and can increase in spatial mass. This means that if this energy is strong enough, it can expand outward in circles of energy and influence the blood and lymphatic systems. Red and white blood cells clump together when there is illness or energy. This bioscalar energy "unsticks" the cells, improving fluid flow and healing.[32] One particular study showed that scalar waves created a twentyfold stimulation of cell growth in human immune cells.[33]

Many healers believe that scalar waves are actually the vital force that animates the chakras; therefore, these waves are able to correct chakra imbalance or dysfunction.[34] Healer Stephen Linsteadt asserts that the scalar waves generated by the heart's scalar field link all the chakra centers together.[35]

Other people are frightened of the potentially destructive nature of scalar waves, which can warp the space-time continuum, although earth chakras naturally shape space-time around their curvatures, usually with beneficial results.[36]

Motoyama Tests For Chakra Functions

Hiroshi Motoyama, whom we've met before, has also conducted numerous studies over decades to explain the existence and functions of both the chakras and meridians. One study detected the energy generated by the chakras in minute levels in the immediate environment of a subject. His tests linked the chakras to these systems:

First Chakra: Sacral and coccygeal plexuses

Second Chakra: Sacral plexus and urogenital system

Third Chakra: Solar plexus and digestive system

Fourth Chakra: Cardiac plexus and circulatory systems

Fifth Chakra: Superior, middle, and interior cervical ganglia; respiratory system

Sixth Chakra: Pituitary body, interbrain, autonomic nervous system, and endocrine system

Seventh Chakra: Cerebral cortex, entire nervous system, organs and tissues of entire body

These findings differ only slightly from standard Hindu theory. For instance, the first chakra is frequently associated with only the coccygeal plexus as well as the urogenital system, leaving the sacral plexus to the second chakra. The respiratory system is usually linked to the fourth chakra instead of the fifth chakra. However, Motoyama's findings are extraordinarily similar to standard theory and reflect the link between chakras, plexuses, and bodily systems.

Motoyama also performed a test to determine disease susceptibility among individuals with chakra activity ranging from none to extensive. The study focused on one hundred yoga students divided into the following groups:

Group A: Advanced chakra activity

Group B: Beginning chakra activity

Group C: Dormant chakras

Susceptibility to disease was highest in group A and lowest in group C, with group B in the middle. Groups A and B were more vulnerable to functional troubles in the organs linked with the chakras. Motoyama's interpretation was that those who used their chakras the most, both generally and specifically, were most affected by their external environment.

In yet another test, Motoyama used an ECG and a plethysmograph, an instrument measuring an organ's change in fluid volume, to investigate the link between the cardiovascular system and the fourth or heart-based chakra. In the case of yogis and long-term spiritual practitioners, Motoyoma noted large rhythmic fluctuations in the basal blood flow in addition to regular heart pulses. This implies that the autonomic nerves controlling the cardiovascular system function in a rhythmic fashion, with a dynamic balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. In other words, as a person

develops the chakras, he or she gains control over the internal organs connected with the chakras.[37]

Motoyama has also investigated the age-old belief that chakras are related to various psi activities. Because of his research, Motoyama ended up classifying psi abilities into two categories: powers of reception and powers of generation. Basically, he discovered that receptive powers are linked to the lower chakras and generative powers to the higher ones.

For instance, the first chakra includes the complete knowledge of kundalini and the power to awaken kundalini, as well as abilities such as levitation and control of emotion, thought, and semen, and the ability to smell fragrances associated with a person or an event (even when not present). The second chakra includes the fear of water (which makes sense, as this chakra is commonly related to the element of water), and the third chakra activates the power to know one's body. Motoyama's understanding of the link between receptivity and the lower chakras is that the lower energy centers must be strong in order for us to live in concrete reality—the reality of this physical planet, not otherworldly planes of reality. The abilities shift in the heart, which is empowered by the principle of love. At this point we can generate energy to send to others.

Motoyama also determined that some individuals have one naturally stronger chakra or set of chakras. His explanation of that is karma: past experiences cause one chakra to be more active than others. In one study he placed electrodes in front of subjects who claimed to have awakened certain chakras. Knowing he couldn't conclusively measure the subtle energy of the chakra, he nonetheless wanted to assess the electrostasis frequencies, which are electrical charges that move slowly and therefore are presumably easier to measure. He discovered that the chakra areas that were presumably stronger did, in fact, emanate stronger frequencies.

It is interesting to note that while he was testing an evolved yogi, Motoyama encouraged him to increase his heart chakra activity to such an extent that researchers could detect a measurable electrical energy. In yet another subject, the subject concentrated on the heart chakra and produced

measurable light or electricity, detected by a photo-electric cell. Motoyama concluded that concentrating on the chakras can activate them but also produce measurable physical changes, such as the creation of light.[38]

A Complete Picture of Chakras as Bands of Frequency

Perhaps the easiest way to relate to the chakras is to keep it simple—in a rather complex sort of way. Each chakra is affiliated with a band of vibrational frequencies, which can be measured in any number of ways but always includes color and sound. It is this fact that enables a chakra to connect the stars with the tiniest movement of an atom in our body.

Basically a chakra is similar to a king: it can relate to—and, to some extent, govern and respond to—anything that falls within the confines of its kingdom, or the band of corresponding frequencies. But this doesn't limit its interactions. Any chakra can relate to any other chakra—and, in fact, at least theoretically, to nearly everything else in the universe. Our king has "Internet" and is wired for outer space.

Dr. Scroggins explains that there are infinite possible combinations of frequencies in the universe. Some of these intersperse matter, but most frequencies are open or "unattached." All aspects of matter and energy, including molecular structures, operate on unique energetic vibrational levels. Every particle or molecule is unique. As we've already established, however, no matter the differences, they can all be described with the same formula, which relates to the radial size, and each rides inside a frequency that directly correlates to that size and vibrational level. Everything rides on a pi radial string of numerical sequences—and every one of these sequences in the universe vibrates with energy (moving information) that interacts with that sequence. These sequences also interact with matter and form information storage bins at these junction points. Add the fact that all particles, molecules, and bundles of molecules, which are constantly vibrating outward in 360-degree rings, are multidimensional. This means that a single particle, because of the sequencing nature of frequency and its multidimensionality, can tap into information stored anywhere in this universe, as well as others.

It means the same for our chakras.

Scroggins believes it is important to understand that we are traveling through and along the frequencies in the universe while they are constantly passing through us. After all, the universe is expanding, and our energy moves with it. This "double movement" means that at every moment, the interactive frequencies of the universe, or at least the numeric sequences of them, interact with us.[39] We are already gigantic storage systems, desktop computers with eons of material encoded within us. Surrounding our genes are the epigenes, a chemical soup that contains our ancestors' memories. Primarily made of viruses as well as other microbes, these epigenes link us to the past. They also largely determine which genes will toggle on and off.

Our bodies themselves are memory units containing the details of everything we've ever thought, felt, or said. Many parts of the brain are involved in the chemical, electrical, and neurological activity that cause our programmed responses to stimulation. I would also suggest that because of the interaction of our physical and energetic fields with others (a concept I'll introduce more completely in our next chapter), we are also linked with anyone we have ever come into contact with—and anyone they have known as well. In fact, because subtle energy doesn't have to obey the traffic cops of the universe and can indulge in quantum principles, we also have informational access to events that could have happened, might be occurring, and could happen in the future, as well as all beings associated with these possibilities.

Surrounding and within this interconnecting flux are universal frequencies that link us to knowledge greater than our own and the knowledge of people we come into contact with. Within this dynamic, chakras operate like multidimensional portals that can tune in to the universal frequency "Internet." As we explored in the last chapter, and as is more fully explained in the "Chakras in Multiplex" section later in this chapter, chakras exist on all levels of our being. Therefore, they are able to operate at measurable color and sound frequencies but also harmonically, or at lower and higher frequencies. As Scroggins asserts, frequency drives energy. If a chakra

operating at the causal level interacts with a set of universal energies or otherworldly beings, the chakra is then able to "spin" this data into our physical bodies, shifting our neurological and endocrine capabilities and advancing us in any number of ways. We would only need a dot of matching frequencies in our actual body to allow this shift to lock in. These spaces of what are called "sympathetic resonance" are interaction points. And of course, we'd need to know how to perceive these interaction points, which chakra medicine practitioners do through their intuition. The truth is that you wouldn't notice the new message or healing energy on the frequency itself, only at the interaction point.

Each chakra is carried on its own independent band of frequencies and is most likely to interact with frequencies that harmonize to itself. The electromagnetic spectrum is a literal spectrum—a continuum of frequencies that increase in intensity one particle at a time. In fact, each color is nothing more than a frequency range. Our perception of the color itself shifts when enough particles change: suddenly, it invites us to see orange instead of red or green instead of yellow.

For the mathematically minded, Scroggins has figured out a complex formula to measure the wavelengths and frequencies of the various colors (data which can also be applied to chakras, which sit within vibrational bands of energy appearing as color as well as the energy between chakras). The following calculations are twofold. Wavelengths are presented in nanometers (NM), a nanometer being a billionth of a meter, and frequencies are presented in gigahertz (GHz), a gigahertz being one billion cycles per second. Scroggins employs elements including the speed of light to arrive at these figures:

Color	Wavelength (NM)	Frequency (GHz)
Red	710	422,242.9577
Red-Orange	670	447,451.4925
Orange	645	464,794.5736

Yellow-Orange	610	491,463.1148
Yellow	580	516,883.6207
Yellow-Green	555	540,166.6667
Green	535	560,359.8131
Blue-Green	490	611,821.4286
Blue	450	666,205.5556
Blue-Violet	420	713,791.6667
Violet	395	758,968.3544
Red-Violet	340	881,742.6471

As you can see, we can easily associate chakras with each of the solid colors, but colors can also be affiliated with tones. On a vibrational basis, chakras receive and send light but do the same with sounds. This is because pitch can be described by frequency too.

In general, there is no universal agreement about which chakra matches a specific note, pitch, or range, although there are many such systems featured throughout this book in relation to the chakras. The most typical association of the chakras to octave notes is featured in chapter 15 and basically affiliates the chakras with C as first chakra, graduating upward to a D in the second chakra, and so on.

A more scientific approach starts with the speed of light in a vacuum as the constant. Recognizing that audible frequencies range between 20 and 25,000 Hz, the basis for figuring out which pitch is associated with each color—and therefore each chakra—is to use wavelength, measured in meters, nanometers, and angstroms. A formula develops that looks like this:

> For 5,800 angstroms (yellow): frequency = 299,792,458 (constant speed in a vacuum)/ 0.00000058 = 516,883,530,000,000 Hz.

As octaves are a result of doubling or halving frequency, this high frequency may be reduced to a precise audible value by cumulative halving. The result of this figuring, solely in terms of hertz and tone, is as follows:

Chakra	Hertz	Tone
First	757.53	G ♭
Second	845.89	A ♭
Third	472.27	A♯
Fourth	527.35	C
Fifth (as blue)	588.86	D
Sixth (as violet)	657.54	E [40]

White typically is not included in these types of tables because it is usually considered to contain all frequencies.

The Sound of the Body

According to John Evans, researcher and author of *Mind, Body, and Electromagnetism*, our body has its own signature sound.[41] In autonomic terms, the sacral nerves are parasympathetic (yang) and the upper thoracic and lumbar are sympathetic (yin). The endocrine positions correlate with the chakra resonances and the colors of each gland. The acupuncture points link spinal positions to internal organs, and the meridians can be perceived as tones of a chromatic sequence. Everything within the body's framework, subtle or physical, vibrates at its own particular rates, creating the individual instrumentation in the "orchestra" of self.

The relationship between "all parts" of the self and the chakras is central. For instance, the acupoints on the meridians are thought of as minor chakras and serve as nodes of vibrational energies. The meridians are comparable to the Hindu nadis that run through and connect the chakras, and every single one of these components of the subtle and physical body vibrates uniquely. If you add all these vibrations together, you end up with a signature sound, or unique self. The chakras can be

pictured as doorways that can immediately or eventually access all the other parts of our being.

Within the overarching "song," each set of frequencies needs to operate within a range of vibration. We become ill, disturbed, or imbalanced when this band of frequency isn't respected. This also means that we emanate our own healthy sound—the sound of the "true self," the sound we are aiming for through chakra medicine.[42]

Chakras in Multiplex: Ladders of Light

As we've already discussed, subtle energy is arrayed in multiple layers along different strata of reality. This means that the (plus or minus) seven chakras exist in multiple levels of reality. One of their many functions is to step energy up and down, from the farthest reaches of heaven to the smallest atoms.

Several of the systems showing these layers of reality and the role of the chakras are featured in Part 8. The goal of covering this topic here is to explain how chakras function as organs of conversion within the multilevel reality that we occupy while also presenting subtle science explanations of this process.

The simplest presentation of the multiple realities and subtle bodies is that there are several layers (often called energy bodies), each of which contains a number of spatial dimensions. The most commonly discussed layers and their dimensions are as follows: etheric layer, three dimensions; astral layer, four dimensions; mental layer, five dimensions; causal layer, five dimensions; and buddhic layer, six dimensions. Layers atop these, covered in chapter 20, are on higher dimensions.[43]

All living beings have access to these dimensions through their major chakras, although there are also chakras unique to each layer. We can only tap into these layers in a graduated manner, however. This means that our chakras are not only operational energetic organs but also vehicles for potential transformation.

As a species, we have evolved over time from the most primal of levels to a higher one (some would say that first we "devolved" and are now emerging again). Some esoteric professionals believe that we have mastered the atomic level, which is physical, and are now operating on the astral plane. This means we can most easily access our chakras between the physical and astral levels.

These various layers differ in frequency and other matters. The physical dimension is primarily mitigated by electromagnetism, which is based on simple spins of energy. The higher planes are more complex and are often described with various geometrical images. This is one of the reasons that chakras are described with yantras and sacred shapes, as well as sounds.[44] The lower the chakra, the simpler its geometric and sacred symbols; conversely, the higher the chakra, the more complex the symbology. In general, the lower chakras process denser and more material energy—or draw from and spin into the lower layers of reality. In contrast, the higher chakras are more complex and reach into higher frames of reality. Following is a discussion about how the seven basic chakras operate on each layer and how the layer-specific chakras work.

Chakras On The Etheric Level

The etheric layer, extending beyond the skin a couple of inches, governs how the physical body functions and how its energy exchanges with the outside world. Partially composed of an electromagnetic biophoton field and partly of a torsion field, the etheric layer helps the body access and move life energy and directs physical growth and healing. It actually serves as the template for the physical body, interacting with DNA to direct change. It sends commands through the acupuncture meridians and enables cell specialization in the embryonic stage.[45] Most frequently, this layer is seen as light blue to gray and is pictured as a net composed of tiny energy lines.

All the chakras specific to this energetic layer range from blue to gray and look like vortexes of light. Through these spins, the sub chakras establish matrixes for the body's cells and organs.[46] All seven major chakras also

operate within the etheric body, linking it to the physical body (as well as to higher layers of reality), though most frequently the etheric body is linked to the first chakra. When all seven chakras function optimally on the etheric level, the physical body reaps the reward. It is now able to fully respond to the vibrational changes downloaded through the etheric body. Also activated are the seven rays described in chapter 20.[47]

Chakras On The Astral Level

The astral body is linked with feelings, emotions, and desires. It channels sensations between the higher mind and the physical self. Located between one and two feet beyond the physical body, it also penetrates the entire physical body. Strong emotional states affect and can expand this body; Buddha's astral body was said to have extended for three miles.

The truth is that our physical body shares space with the astral body, which is quite colorful in a developed person, each color representing a feeling. Because of this, it is often called the "rainbow body," although some individuals use that same term for the seven in-body chakras or the light body. Many people journey on the astral plane, an extension of the astral body, their soul traveling into various realities.[48] In Hindu and Theosophical traditions, the astral plane is often considered the liquid aspect of the cosmic subplanes, which are one of three planes of existence (the others are the physical, which is solid, and mental, which is gaseous).[49]

Through my work and global travels and studies, I have also found there are three levels of the astral plane. The high astral plane is accessible to enlightened beings. Our highest self can dwell on this level and meet there with other enlightened beings. The middle astral plane is available to souls of the living and deceased. We can visit with these souls to learn about our life concerns. Inhabiting the lower astral plane are entities or aspects of a soul that are stuck in challenging issues. We travel this plane to observe our deepest wounds and shadow sides, and those of others.

When the physical body dies, I believe that the etheric body absorbs a being's soul and all the memories, karma, and teachings of that lifetime.

Along with other experts, I believe that the soul is then absorbed into the astral dimensions. If the soul hasn't accelerated past the astral dimensions, it creates the energetic structure to join heaven (higher astral), purgatory (middle astral), or hell (lower astral). The soul can also stretch beyond the astral and into the higher planes, as well as to levels of existence I call "the planes of light" that enable a soul to evolve while in between lifetimes.

Specific astral chakras are considered fourth dimensional, but we don't know exactly what they look like, as their appearance is projected on the lower three dimensions. They are symmetrical in shape and located in the center of the body, opening to the front and back sides of the body.[50] They help link the etheric body to the higher vehicles, although many systems relate the astral plane primarily with the second chakra.[51] Other experts, however, link the astral layer to the heart chakra.[52]

In the astral body, the seven traditional chakras look like a vortex of different colors, all described with the colors of the rainbow. It is likely that astral coloration is the reason we ascribe the rainbow colors to the chakras.[53]

Chakras On The Mental Level

The mental layer is a five-dimensional reality that focuses consciousness on the intellect. Here memory and imagination reign, and we can access facts. In highly developed people this body is almost like a computer that can access whatever information they desire.

Information is shared through waves sent from the mental plane. These waves aren't subject to time and distance; they can share information from any "when" or "where." Often described as thoughtforms, these waves can be shared with an individual, who can then send them elsewhere. Data sources include the Akashic Records—the storage center of anything a person has ever thought, felt, or done—as well as unlimited storage houses of information from every dimension.[54] Various systems divide this layer of reality into separate planes. A person's lower mental body is part of their personality and configured for a particular lifetime, while their higher mental

body is spiritual in nature and permanent. The latter is concerned with abstract thinking and principles, not specific pieces of data.

This body is often perceived as yellow and quite structured, which makes sense, as yellow often represents information and organization. Because of this, many systems affiliate the third chakra with this body, although this idea varies.[55] The truth is that every one of our major chakras can receive both lower and higher mental ideas.

Chakras On The Causal Level

Atop the mental body is the causal plane, which is often equated with the higher mental body in that it deals with formless rather than focused thoughts. Its name evokes its true job: to cause events in the lower planes. Carrying our memories and karma from lifetime to lifetime, it allows us to manifest experiences, making it a very creative plane indeed.[56]

Chakras aren't as defined in this arena, which is called the *karana sharira* in Sanskrit and relates to the *anandamaya kosha*, or blissful sheath. Rather, the causal body causes both gross and subtle bodies to exist as illusions; we only perceive them as real.[57]

Chakras On The Buddhic Level

At the highest levels there is less energetic individualism and more overlap with other beings. At the buddhic level separateness falls away, and we stop blaming others for their differences; rather, we perceive them as manifestations of aspects of our own consciousness. We can still gain wisdom from others' unique experiences, however, choosing not to participate in interactions that don't fit our value system, such as evil or cruel activities.

Despite the fact we don't really "need" chakras at this level, they still exist on the other planes. When interacting with others' chakras, we can now perceive them from the "inside out," as if they are "our" chakras.[58] Some experts link this plane to the fifth chakra, attributing the communication center to Buddha's teachings, but others affiliate it with different chakras.[59]

Chakras and Embryonic Development

In the last chapter I introduced Grant McFetridge, who theorizes the existence of chakras in the embryonic state. His theory presents an unusual picture of the chakras and their functions.

McFetridge's observations have led him to conclude that a fully developed chakra system is one in which all the chakras are fused into a disk located in the solar plexus area. This allows a "flow awareness" state, or the ability to process information and emotions easily. Someone in "chakra flow" would be able to operate effortlessly. His research has also shown that individual chakras anchor into the meridians. Depending on the bond, problems can create depletion or hyperactivity.

Most importantly, according to McFetridge, chakras are actually devices run by corresponding energy-based brains. Within this context chakras wouldn't be considered mini brains, which they are according to many theories; rather, they are depicted as vehicles managed by aspects of consciousness.

McFetridge explains that our precellular brains contain one or more chakras, which energetically look like glowing balls of light. The egg has seven major chakras, but the precellular sperm has a heart-brain with a series of chakra balls that extend upward and downward. As the egg and sperm come together or coalesce, the chakras ideally converge into a single smooth-edged chakra in the solar plexus area, about two-thirds above this area and one-third below. This results in a chakra disk that has indentations on the rim. During any of the stages leading to the creation of this disk, trauma—either inherited or something that happens to the fertilizing egg—can cause imperfections in the final fusion: the cohesive chakra fragments resulting in the typical seven-chakra pattern. In the young fertilized egg, the separated chakras can now be seen as physical structures attached to the nuclear membrane. After this point, the chakras anchor into the meridians.

Because we usually have separate chakra balls during gestation, a fetus copies its mother's use of her chakra balls.[60] Most likely, one of the reasons

that chakra medicine practitioners—and professional therapists, for that matter—so frequently relate issues, problems, and patterns to a subject's mother is that a child models his or her chakras after the mother's chakras. We then "inherit" her life viewpoints and attitudes, as well as her behaviors. However, according to McFetridge, the results of activities affecting the primary cell remain with us our entire lives, causing genes to toggle on or off. Modeling is important, but so is the primary cell.

In relation to this theory, Dr. Scroggins's suggestion is that our initial code sequence is accessible throughout our lives, but it can be affected by changes in frequency levels, which create rifts in our cellular codes. Certainly we receive baseline combinations from both parents, as well as their ancestors. These effects can even activate "sleeper" cells, or potential game-changers, which can alter our genes, attitudes, and behaviors. At some point, Scroggins theorizes, science might even figure out how to analyze an individual's first code, or even the parents' codes, to project the subject's development, including everything from their taste in ice cream to their ideal geographic location in which to live.[61]

There is also a scientific theory that explains how chakras could be a vital part of embryonic development. Researcher Richard W. Maxwell, in a paper called "The Neurobiology of Chakras and Prayer," acknowledges that the challenge with the chakra field is demonstrating how something nonphysical could operate physically. Maxwell's theory takes us right into the life of an embryo, during which time the dividing cell is undergoing what are called gap junctions, which are associated with electrical conduction. These gap junctions, says Maxwell, explain chakras and other subtle systems, including the meridians, and why they might affect us physically.

Gap junctions are hydrophilic passages between the cytoplasm of two adjacent cells. They are formed by certain proteins arranged in hexagonal shapes and are involved in electrical conduction. Among their activities, they synchronize hormone secretions, help neurons fire, relate neurons to glial cells, and coordinate activity in embryological development. Some researchers have proposed that acupuncture points and the meridians linking

them arise from dense areas of gap junctions. The chakras are related to gap junctions that link autonomic cells and the parts of the central nervous system that control the differentiation of autonomic and other neural cells.

Basically, the gap junctions concentrated in certain regions each relate to a classically known chakra. In these areas the gap junctions are also associated with the endocrine system and the central nervous system. In this scenario the Hindu-proposed sushumna is equivalent to a network of glial cells that extend from the spine to the brain and allow a full electrical connection between the two. It also incorporates the neural tube that relates to the gap junctions.

Three main activities are associated with these gap junctions in relation to the chakras:

- A physical base located in the dorsal central nervous system
- A concentration point within this base
- Influence of this physical base over glandular secretions, which can also influence mental activities

If, in fact, chakras are subtle structures that emanate from or at least connect to these points, a change in chakra activity would modify the physical centers in the central nervous system.

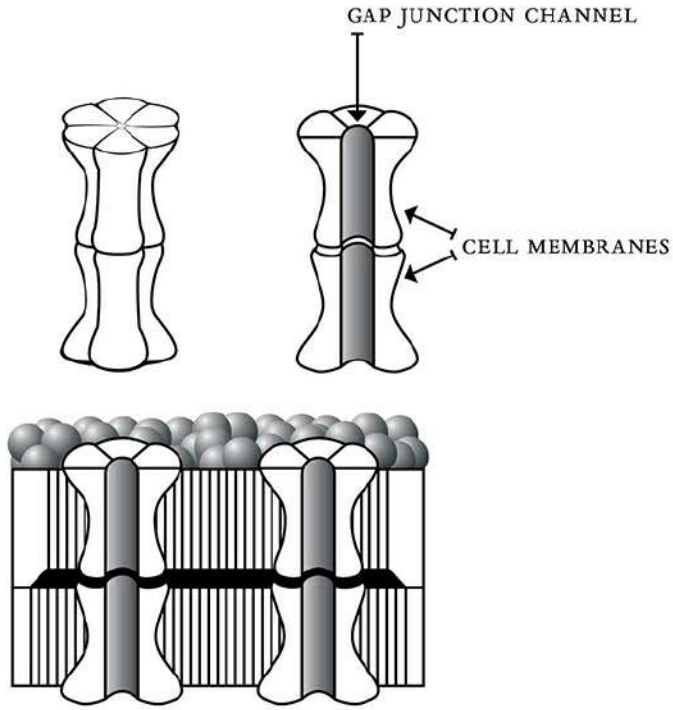


ILLUSTRATION 52—GAP JUNCTIONS: Gap junctions channel energy across two cell membranes. This image shows gap junctions between two neurons. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

The only chakras that aren't linked to these neural cells, specifically the neural crest cells, are the higher chakras, which aren't connected to nerve plexuses. However, bones and cartilage of the face and parts of the head are formed from the neural crest cells. Even after they are formed, they could keep the higher chakras linked to the central nervous system.

The theory of gap junctions also affiliates chakras with hormone systems. This is an important point because chakra medicine features techniques for controlling glandular secretions through mental actions. Science shows that gap junctions, operating electrically, can also affect endocrine functions.

Maxwell actually wonders if the reason chakras are perceived as nonphysical is that the chemical synaptic functions (which also involve electrical conduction) of both the central nervous system and the autonomic nervous system are more difficult to discern than electrical gap junction networks. In other words, chemically based nerve functions spread differently

from electrical gap junction networks. For a yogi, the physical base of a chakra is in the subordinate electrical circuitry that becomes accessible to conscious control of the central nervous system, autonomic nervous system, and endocrine system. Yoga training provides access to these subtle electrical circuits and functions.

Kundalini, too, can be explained with this theory, as you will see in chapter 22. To finish our current thought, though, Maxwell noted an unusually high concentration of gap junction–linked cells at the end of the spinal column and associated with the coccyx and other first chakra physical mechanisms covered in chapter 4. One idea is that kundalini is, at least in part, a description of changes among the polar molecules within the spine rising from the filum terminale, the end filament of the spinal cord, to the brain. Experts associating it with kundalini include Sir Arthur Avalon, who noted that it contains nerve cell bodies and connects the chakra points. Most of the neurons in the brain, as well as our motor or movement neurons, are considered polar or multipolar, which means they are shaped in such a way as to allow for the integration of a lot of information from other neurons. This model would portray the spinal column as a series of gap junction–linked cells whose gap junctions open as the kundalini rises.[62]

The Structure of the Chakras

To recap what we have said so far in this chapter: chakras as nerve plexuses are structured into the neurological system, which means they are chemical and electrical. They are also anchored in the hormone and cardiovascular systems. A simple feeling or relational interchange can be conveyed by and through a single chakra and, in a moment, can be conducted to thousands of other sites in the physical body, therefore into any or all other major or minor chakras—including those that rise into other levels of reality.

As bands of frequency, chakras are unlimited in their outreach. Often energy is received from the outside world through the correlated auric field and then transferred into the related chakra, which then disseminates data every which way—chemically, electrically, and through fields and

frequencies. The reverse is also true. Whether they are operating physically or through color or sound, chakras interpenetrate all of reality.

To understand the nature of the chakra even more completely— as well as kundalini, the topic of the next chapter—I want to dive into the issues of chakra structure, a subject I first introduced in chapter 1. Chakras are organs. This means that they function in certain ways relative to the flow of energy, structural organization, and spin. As we examine these issues, know that many of the exercises in this book enable you to make use of this information.

Chakras, Structure, and Spin

As we have already determined, chakras maintain a yin-yang balance in our life. They do this by flowing energy to the left and right sides of the body and internally within the chakra from the left side into the right side. The left side receives energy from the world and the right side shares information about us with the world. The front and back sides each process different information—the everyday versus the supernatural, respectively—and the inner wheel manages our spiritual function, while the outer wheels help us adapt to the external world. These factors help create chakra spin.

Many bodily energies emanate spin. The fibers of the heart, for example, cause the heart muscles to form looping spirals. Red blood cells also loop, their cell membranes a network of protein hexagons that look like a geodesic dome. Joints move through spin, as do bones.[63]

One of the factors in this dance of life is a form of magnetic resonance produced by the heart and the resulting left ventricular torsion, a term borrowed from our studies of subtle energy and important to our current discussion.[64]

There are countless examples of spin in the body. For instance, certain red blood cells are shaped like discs. Because of their form, they move through blood vessels in a spiraling shape—the very same types of twists we find in DNA double helixes and many forms of organic and inorganic matter, which can be described as lines of force that impact growth.[65] We find spin or

vortexes when EMFs expand, and, of course, in the movement of the chakras. In fact, every time we have two similar rotations with a small frequency difference, we end up with a vortex.

One of the shapes that commonly produces spin is a torus, which looks like a donut or a bagel. One property of the torus is that it is connected like a Mobius strip, which really only has one surface. In particle physics, the torus provides the best environment for accelerating particles. It is also a potential opening to the vacuum or zero-point field, sometimes called a black hole.[66] Illustration 53 shows both a torus and a torus with a vacuum or zero-point field inside.

Many modern chakra experts envision the chakra as a two-ended trumpet, a depiction of two connected spherical tori. In this manner the chakra torus operates like a gyroscope and actually creates a torus-like energy flow through and around the entire body, leaving us in the middle of a donut; the flow around our head and feet is bidirectional, flowing first one way and then another like the tides.[67] This analogy also describes kundalini in the form of a double coil of helixes with complementary chains of yin and yang.[68] Illustration 54 shows how a chakra is constructed from a torus and reveals the symmetry of the heart as toroidal.

ILLUSTRATION 53—THE TORUS, ZERO-POINT INSERT, AND THE CHAKRA: The donut-shaped torus (top) revolves around a black hole, or a zero-point vacuum in the center. As noted in Illustration 54, a chakra can be pictured like a torus, its center comparable to a vacuum through which energy can be released or pulled. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

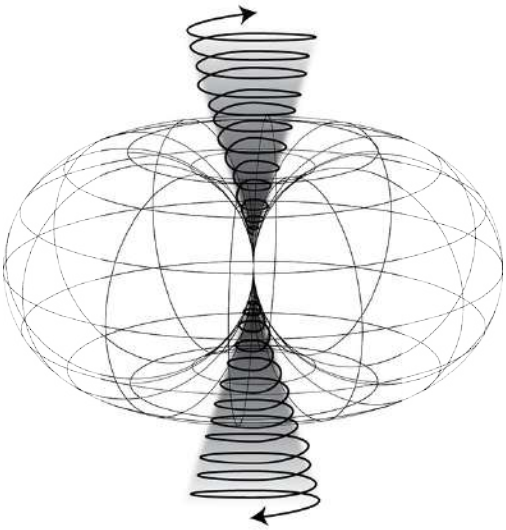
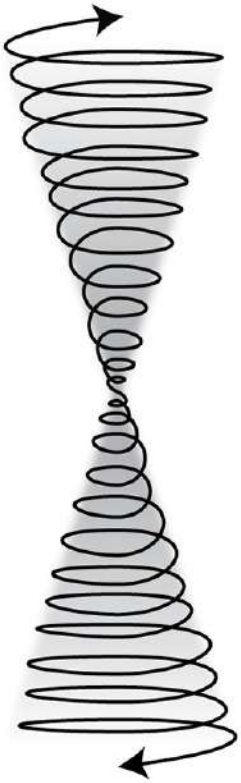
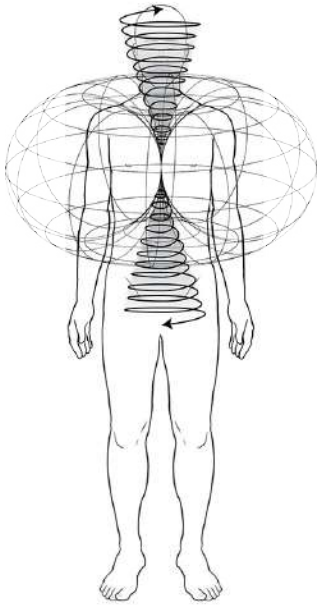


ILLUSTRATION 54—TWO-SIDED CHAKRA (LEFT) AND THE HEART'S FIELD (RIGHT): Chakras are often considered to be made of a torus, the spindle connected with the spine. The heart's electromagnetic field is a combination of torus shapes and spin.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC AND LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT





One of the reasons this spiraling occurs in the body is because of bilateral symmetry—the fact that we have two sides. Consider what forces might make the sixth chakra spin. From an endocrine point of view there are two parts of the pituitary, which can rotate in opposite directions, thereby creating a spin. In terms of the chakras, the fact that a chakra inhabits the left and right side of the body, and also has a right and left side, ensures the generation of two rotating vectors with different frequencies or rates of rotation, thus giving rise to the idea of inner and outer energy flows creating chakra patterns. The actual form is produced by frequency ratio and direction of the rotation, which at the physical level is created by fundamental electrical, gravitational, and developmental frequencies such as those generated by the spine.[69]

To explain this, electrical currents running near the spine cause spin directions. The right side of the spine features a positively charged current, the left side has a negatively charged current, and the center is neutral. This description relates also to the right, left, and center nadis, respectively. The right-side current travels up the right until it comes to the top of the first chakra, after which it splits. Part of the right-side current continues up the

right side of the spine and the other half crosses over to the left side of the spine, in between the top of the first chakra and the bottom of the second chakra. This positively charged current now moves up the left side and crosses over again at the bottom of the third chakra. Onward goes the looping path, with the left-side current operating in the same zigzag fashion.

The right-side (positive) current is dominant and spins the first chakra to the left as it comes up the right side of the first chakra. The first chakra now spins counterclockwise. When the positive current returns to home base at the top of the second chakra, it spins the second chakra to the right, or clockwise. Under this scenario, the odd-numbered chakras usually spin counterclockwise and the even-numbered chakras spin clockwise.[70] See Illustration 55 for a depiction of the crisscrossing of the nadis that produce these currents.

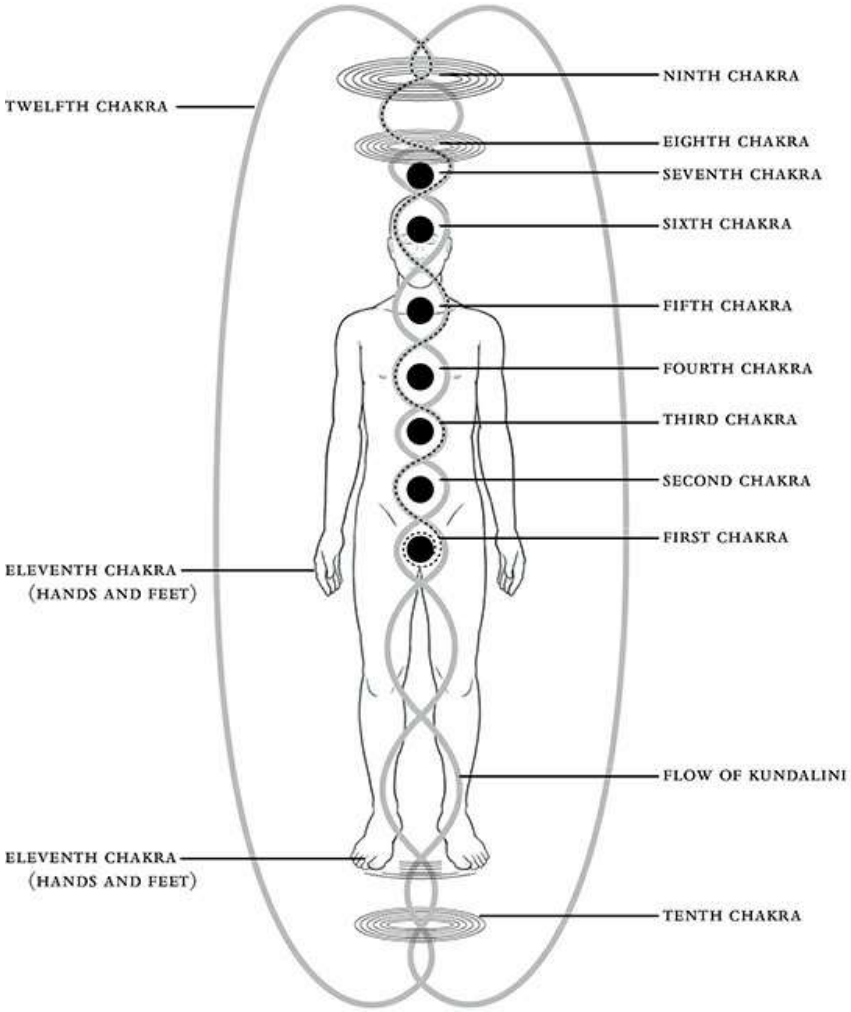


ILLUSTRATION 55—THE RISING OF CHARGES: As positive and negative currents rise and cross over the chakras, shown here on the twelve-chakra system model, we find our kundalini pattern emerging. The dotted line indicates the negative charge that is affiliated with the ida nadi, which is located on the left side of the first chakra and is considered feminine. The pingala arises on the right side of the first chakra and is considered positive. The kundalini flows through these and other nadis, such as the central sushumna. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC AND LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Logic would also suggest that disturbances in the electrical flow, such as chakra blocks, would change the directions of the chakras. Yet another explanation of chakra spin returns us to our discussions of torsion fields, which Kozyrev called spin waves that move through space. Torsion waves explain how entropy, or disorder involving information in the universe, is constantly preserved, fulfilling natural law.

As a reminder, when entropy increases, information disappears from that state, only to reappear somewhere else. At the second site, entropy would be said to be decreasing. As counterintuitive as it seems, the following is therefore true:

- Entropy increasing equals information disappearing
- Entropy decreasing equals information appearing

Where entropy decreases we get what is called left-handed torsion, which makes disks spin counterclockwise (moving to the left as seen from the top). Experiments showed that left-handed torsion causes yang types of reactions such as the growth of plants and flowers. This makes sense, as energy is being added. Where entropy increases we have right-handed torsion. Studies have shown that right-handed torsion causes disks to spin clockwise (moving to the right as viewed from above); this spin, having more yin in orientation, costs energy and caused debilitation in plants and flowers.[71]

Our formula now looks like this:

- Entropy increases—information disappears—right-handed torsion—clockwise spin
- Entropy decreases—information appears—left-handed torsion—counterclockwise spin

These findings would suggest that the counterclockwise spins add energy and clockwise spins subtract energy. I would suggest that we must be careful with this conclusion, however. When a mirror was used during experiments, the torsion field reversed polarity, causing the properties to be reversed.[72] Think of what happens when you look into a mirror. The resulting image is opposite your "real" life one. This is what occurred with the polarities in the experiment when a mirror was present. The clockwise spins brought in energy and the counterclockwise spins lost energy. This point is important because many chakra systems state that clockwise spins cause the gaining of energy and counterclockwise spins force a loss of energy. In my own practice, I have found that individuals can be quite different. Some individuals' chakras consistently run clockwise and others typically spin counterclockwise, hence various systems might differ depending on who first created the system.

The other factor is that I believe there are two wheels involved with each chakra. The internal wheel actually links to the zero-point vacuum in the center and reflects our spiritual essence. The outer wheel holds our programming and reflects our more wounded self. These two wheels run opposite. Most people identify with their outer wheel rather than their inner wheel. Depending on which we identify with, our clockwise and counterclockwise functions might be different.

In general, I believe that when our inner wheel is in charge, the clockwise spins bring in energy and the counterclockwise spins exit energy. Then again, everyone is unique. While I can't make a final conclusion, it is possible that the inner wheel of the chakra operates like a mirror, shifting the torsion properties and causing clockwise movement to bring in energy and counterclockwise movement to lose energy.

Additional research adds more complexity to our exploration. Chakra medicine practitioners are known for their ability to shift time and space and produce nearly miraculous results such as through the siddhi gifts. Research subsequent to Kozyrev suggests what might be occurring during such magical chakra moments. In studies they conducted in the late 1980s, two

Japanese physicists, Hideo Hayasaka and Sakae Takeuchi, spun a gyroscope in a left rotation at a fast pace. The gyroscope showed no weight change; however, the one rotated to the right was found to weigh less or undergo a "levitation effect."[73]

According to Kozyrev's theories, these effects would be explained by the nature of a torsion, which can be imaged as a twisting vector between two points in space-time. The issue isn't really one of weight but of time. Time is thinner at the end of a right-handed torsion wave and denser at the other end, shifting the nature of space and how much mass can be perceived on either side, producing an antigravity effect.[74] Wherever time is denser, such as with left-handed spins, we actually have negative time flow and information is taken away; ESP becomes easier.[75] Where time is thinner, as with right-handed spins, information is added.[76] Frequency is basically altered, changing the relationship with the vacuum; the pattern of the spin decides what is going to happen with the information.[77]

Which Way Is the Chakra Spinning?

To answer this question from a scientific point of view, we might link vector science with chakraology. The movement of the internal layers of a toroid field depends on the density or capacity ratio and how this is distributed. In a nutshell, if the gravitational field at the center is positive, the torus will move clockwise. If it is negatively charged, it will move counterclockwise. This simplified explanation of directional spin even applies to the rotation of planets. If we view the chakras as toroid fields (fields produced by a torus), which many metaphysicians do, we might agree with what is said in the Hermetic tradition: "as above, so below."[78]

Chakras and the Famous Lotus

We've now offered a couple of suggestions for why chakras spin and how this spin affects the chakra—and us. What about the reason that chakras are depicted as lotuses? One way to grasp the concept is to picture a helicopter with two propeller blades. When they are going full speed, they share similar frequencies and you perceive one blur. When they slow down, they begin rotating at different frequencies and a distinct lotus pattern emerges.

In general, if two rotation rates are equal and opposite, the vectors will meet at two diametrically opposite points. But if there is a little difference—as would be the case with a blocked chakra or a chakra processing levels of reality, such as the etheric and the causal, at inconsistent rates—they would converge off-center and you would end up with distinct divisions of a circle. Very high numbers of petals actually indicate very little difference, although lower numbers could occur uniformly because of resonance as well.[79] One interesting aside is that when frequency ratios are in near unity, the two components begin to cancel each other out. The result is that the vectors spiral toward the center and then spiral out toward the edges—and we have the vortex typically perceived in chakras.[80]

A biologist wearing a white research coat and sporting a textbook and microscope would be comfortable with much of this chapter. From a purely biological point of view, chakras are intertwined with our body's neurological and biochemical systems. Because of this, a chakra is an organ of many facets. We've seen that it is psychophysiological, electromagnetic, sonic, and also an important component of embryonic development, which means that scientists of other disciplines would now be fascinated. But they are also etheric organs, members of a greater subtle energy body family. Each of these greater energy bodies or levels of reality, many of which link with our seven in-body chakras, also have their own chakric system. A few of these additional levels of reality include the etheric, astral, mental, causal, and buddhic planes. As you'll discover in part 6, various esoteric professionals add additional layers of knowledge.

To help you comprehend the sheer artistry of this complicated organ, I have also showcased various structural aspects of the chakra. A chakra, established on a band of frequency, also has a flow of energy, spin, and shape. Indeed, chakras are multifaceted organs that appear at every stage of our lives.

In and of themselves, chakras reinforce the age-old belief that we truly are divine beings in human bodies. Yet they are vehicles—for physical health, psychological well-being, and spiritual consciousness—that require a special activation in order to function. That activating element is kundalini, the divine flame and the subject of the next chapter.

[contents]

Kundalini Rises

THE CHAKRA SERPENT

> THE KUNDALINI IS your own mother. Your individual mother. And she has tape-recorded all your past and your aspirations, everything. And she rises because she wants to give you your second birth, but she is your individual mother. You don't share her with anyone else.
>
> SHRI MATAJI

Liquid fire. Divine light. The Sacred Marriage. The Great Bliss. The Holy Ghost, the red serpent, life energy. Kundalini is known by many names across hundreds of cultures. This concentrated form of cosmic energy is frequently depicted as first lying coiled at the base of the spine and then rising like an undulating serpent, piercing the chakras and provoking enlightenment. To understand kundalini on spiritual, energetic, and biological levels is to hold the key to chakra medicine, the ultimate goal of which is to merge our human and spiritual qualities so that every day we are alive is a brilliant one.

The purpose of this chapter is to part the curtains that veil this flame of the gods, the feminine instigator of transformation and transmutation. After first exploring the most traditional storyline of kundalini, which emerged thousands of years ago in the Hindu tradition, I will further define the basic concepts of kundalini from the perspective of several cultures. The latter discussion will prove, without a shadow of a doubt, that while kundalini is

often explained in Hindu terms, it is a worldwide phenomenon, applicable to every one of us. It is our birthright.

As I've been doing throughout part 5, I will next traverse into science, examining the neurological, hormonal, electromagnetic, and other physical aspects of kundalini. As we shall see, however, kundalini is more than a physiological reaction to physical events; it is a firecracker that ignites consciousness.

As you close this chapter, I hope you will have achieved insights into the fundamental reason to cultivate kundalini and participate in chakra medicine. As a tribal master from the !Kung people of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana shared, the reason to foster a kundalini awakening—which his people call the *!kia* state—is to be able to truthfully say "I can become myself again."[1]

It is good to become the selves we really are.

Kundalini in Indian Literature: The Mother of Love

The story of kundalini provides a cosmology that embraces many Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. Whatever the context, however, to know this feminine energy is to be known by the sacred mother, the eternal feminine who dances with the infinite father while we, her children, play within their benevolent universe. Though many different cultures attest to the presence of kundalini, some of which I will explore in this chapter, perhaps the ancient Hindus told the tale best.

The word kundalini comes from the Sanskrit word *kundal*, which means "spiral" or "coil." In yoga, kundalini is also Shakti, the feminine goddess. Within the body, she is depicted as an energy powerhouse resembling a serpent lying coiled and at rest or asleep.

Dozens of references to kundalini appear in sacred Indian texts dating from 3000 BCE onward, all emerging from present-day India and Pakistan. In the *Yajurveda*, the rising kundalini is compared to a virgin energy that rises like a devoted wife to destroy evil. Each of its movements emits a fire that pierces the chakras. In the *Saundarya Lahari*, kundalini is said to pierce the first through sixth chakras and then enter the crown chakra, moving step by step.

After she reaches the crown, according to the *Yoga Sikha Upanishad*, we can achieve liberation.

In most references kundalini is described as an aspect of supreme consciousness with and without form or attribute. When it is seen with attributes or qualities, kundalini is personified as a reflection of the Divine Mother or great goddess. According to Sir John Woodroffe's interpretation of the literature, when this divine energy is polarized or static, it is called kundalini; when it is dynamic or flowing, it is called prana.[2]

In the classical literature of Kashmir Shaivism, kundalini has three manifestations. Tantric master Abhinava Gupta used the terms *purna-kundalini* or Prana Shakti to describe the divine feminine energy of the universe; *prana-kundalini* to emphasize kundalini as a life force, further subdivided into the five prana vayus; and *urdhva kundalini* to label the upward-moving and evolutionary energy of the awakened serpent. Each of these three levels of kundalini relates to one of three *lokas*, or realms of existence, that represent radiant emptiness, energy, and the appearance of form. Also linked are three sounds (which can be used as mantras) and yantras, the geometric maps of the creative force that bring us back to the inception of each *loka,* or universe.[3] Hence we see a few of the complexities of kundalini, the energy behind form.

Always, Kundalini Shakti is part of an intricate love story. Once awakened from repose, she travels up the spine, most typically through the sushumna, the main nadi located in the spine, on a journey often called the "kula path," circling the chakras as she ascends. As Shakti undulates upward and pierces the chakras, she stimulates the issues held within them in order to clear the path toward enlightenment. Her goal is the crown chakra, where her mate, Shiva, resides. Their unification is a worldwide love story depicting the union of opposites.[4]

Shakti and Shiva are actually dualistic aspects of Brahman, the ultimate reality behind the observable universe. Brahman is infinite, unbound by time or space, and the source of everything known and unknown. In the Bhagavad Gita, Brahman is referred to as the "Unmanifested"; in the *Maitri Upanishad,*

Brahman is the "Infinite One…By Him alone is all this meditated on, and in Him it is dissolved." So as we approach Brahman and the state held within and by him, we seek to attain the complementary principles of Brahman. Shakti is the creative energy, often considered dynamic and kinetic, and Shiva is the conscious principle, considered static and permanent.[5]

At the outset, the upward flow of the Shakti energy sounds relatively simple. The kundalini awakens and undulates upward through the sushumna nadi, awakening each of the six chakras as she goes. As she stimulates the chakras, the issues laden in the chakras activate. She hovers in any blocked areas until we work through the issues involved and then continues her upward climb until uniting with Shiva in the crown chakra.

The actual process is much more complicated—and, to me, more beautiful—than this. It is full of blocks, locks, detours, and intricacies, often rendering kundalini consciousness hard to obtain.

A Homeward Journey

It's important to understand that Shakti's ascension is a homeward journey. Wholeness is our natural state; a kundalini process is a way to regain, not achieve, freedom from illusion and separation. During Creation with a capital C (for the Creation of the universe) and creation with a lowercase c (standing for our individual creation), Shakti descends from the crown to the lower chakras. During this de-evolution she is known as *jagan mohini,* world bewilderer, her forgetfulness causing *maya,* delusion. This downward fall causes her to become physical and lose her natural power and subtlety. Once she reawakens and starts climbing again, however, she slowly transforms from the physical back into the subtle, eventually reabsorbing the creative principles reflected in the crown chakra in a process called laya-absorption. The veils of maya disintegrate; like a mirage cleared by a sandstorm, we can finally see the location of the oasis. Whereas her descent initiated ignorance and bondage, Shakti's rising leads to freedom and wisdom.

Even in a dormant state, however, Kundalini Shakti is our connection to higher awareness. While in the state of taking form, kundalini manages and

alters the biological functions of the body and our psychology, enabling manifestation. When she is united with Shiva, kundalini transcends form and shines as unlimited consciousness. Always she is the revealer of our own soul songs, which become more clear and defined as we mature in kundalini awakening.[6] Always she meets us where we happen to be. Even so, her interactions with us can be explained in somewhat orderly—though not so tidy—stages.

The Stages of the Kundalini Climb

How we each react to the kundalini process is unique to us as individuals, but there are consistent stages and events. The generic stages involved in a kundalini climb are as follows:

Purification: Preparation for the upward climb

Activation: Kundalini arousal, also called the awakening

Rising: Kundalini's journey through the nadis and chakras

Integration: Living in—and as—light[7]

As we explore these stages, picture yourself as already dwelling in one of them, perhaps being ready to move to the next.

The First Kundalini Stage: Purification

Purification involves preparing for a kundalini awakening. This can take place consciously or unconsciously. The groundwork is sometimes laid unconsciously because many people don't link their daily activities to a kundalini arousal. They might not even know that the years they spent in addiction recovery, family systems therapy, dedication to a spiritual path, or focusing on goodness have led them to a kundalini awakening—and then, suddenly, their life changes.

The best-known techniques for actualizing a kundalini awakening are prayer, meditation, contemplation, and just plain compassionate living, as well as a whole host of yoga-oriented techniques. Traditional yoga theory outlines seven *sadhanas,* daily spiritual practices, that help the practitioner

turn inward. There are many types of sadhanas in Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Muslim traditions, among others. There are also many schools of yoga, including Jnana, Raja, Laya, Hatha, and Mantra yoga. Among these yogic traditions there are seven basic sadhanas:

Sat-karma: Bodily cleansing

Asanas: Postures

Mudras: Hand gestures

Pranayama: Breath control

Pratyahara: Withdrawal of the senses

Dhyana: Meditation

Samadhi: Ecstasy (there are two types of samadhi: *savikalpa* [imperfect], in which dualism still exists, and *nirvikalpa*, involving the realization of unity)

Eight-limbed yoga or Ashtanga yoga has some of the same components, with the addition of others. It includes asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana, and samadhi and adds *yamas* (self-control through chastity), including temperance (avoidance of harm) and other virtues; *niyamas* or religious observances; and *dharana*, fixation on an object.[8] In recent times yogic activities have expanded to include all forms of chakra medicine, including the use of crystal therapy, homeopathy, and other techniques.

I believe that, in essence, there are three main philosophies of kundalini cultivation. These three concepts can also apply to the activation and even the type of support to offer during a kundalini climb. Some individuals prefer a strident and strict program, one that deliberately aims at a kundalini awakening. One of the writings about Hatha yoga work, the *Pradipika*, underlines this path by suggesting that one should "arouse the sleeping serpent by seizing its tail." Within this viewpoint, only intense practices will "stir" the power needed to awaken kundalini energy.[9]

Others might agree with Abhinava Gupta, mentioned in our earlier discussion of Kashmir Shaivism. As he stated in his work *Tantraloka*, we

should never torture our body in the name of enlightenment. Discouraging excessively restricted disciplines, he believed instead that once we experience the inner bliss of the self, attachment to bodily pleasures and temptations will automatically decrease.[10]

Others might instead employ *shaktipat*, an initiation involving the transfer of an awakening energy from a teacher to a student. What is important to remember is that kundalini is a mother to us all, but also to each of us personally. If Kundalini Shakti is going to choose to awaken within us, she will find a way.

The Second Kundalini Stage: Activation

Activation can also occur in any number of ways, often in accordance with individual personality. As I mentioned, a kundalini arousal can follow years of deliberate or sometimes unintentional cultivation. Kundalini can also arouse spontaneously, perhaps in a dramatic and unexpected fashion. Sometimes the combustion of kundalini power follows a traumatic event or a long-term stressor, although it can also be triggered by a dream, a sexual experience, or a spiritual *eureka!*

Some individuals are born partially aroused, which means that their kundalini is somewhat awake but not enough to make the climb. Perhaps they've already attained an incomplete rising, which means that the kundalini has ascended beyond the first chakra. They might even be fully awakened. In these circumstances the fetus might have been activated in the womb by parental influences, positive or negative. For instance, either Mom or Dad might have experienced a kundalini awakening while the child was in utero. More likely, either or both parents were affected by a shocking experience such as financial ruin or abuse. Either type of stimulation can cause the child's kundalini energy to react in order to adapt or cope.

Sometimes the child achieved a high level of kundalini proficiency in a past life. This accomplishment could transfer into the child in utero or cause an early kundalini activation after birth. Kundalini can also become aroused in a child who experiences intensely loving circumstances—or the opposite.

Sometimes severe abuse, illness, or neglect forces a kundalini arousal and even a rising. The child's system might unconsciously "decide" that the extra power is necessary for survival.

I also believe that a kundalini arousal can occur because of an event that triggers an epigenetic memory. Epigenes are the noncoding genes in the chemical soup that surrounds the coding genes. This mixture has been proven to store ancestral memories and issues. When triggered, the epigenes can toggle the effective genes on or off, causing reactions in the body—and, I believe, in the energetic system.

Imagine that someone's ancestor responded to the loss of a mate or some other stressor with a full-blown kundalini arousal. A similar life event could therefore cause a descendant's energy and physical system to react in the same way. Epigenetic encryptions could even explain the types of kundalini reactions that occur.[11]

Kundalini Awakes

On the energetic level, an arousal involves—and necessitates—a complex set of activities. First the energy must be flowing smoothly in the three basic nadis—the ida, pingala, and sushumna—and prana must be flowing equally in all of them.[12]

This is important because once the kundalini heats up within the nadis, it pierces the chakras. The process could be lopsided if the energies on the right and left side of the chakras, which are located in the crisscrossing intersections of the ida and pingala, are uneven.[13]

Before arousal, the kundalini sleeps in the first chakra, sustained by the powerful earth element available there. She lies wrapped in three and a half coils in the hollow of the triangular sacrum bone, considered a sacred part of the body in many cultures; ancient Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians attributed supernatural or holy powers to the sacrum, and Westerners have often compared this cavernous area to the Holy Grail, the chalice of divine nectar. The coils themselves have often been compared to the ground of nature, or *prakriti*, with each of the three winding coils representing one of the

qualities: sattva, rajas, and tamas. This notion also relates to the Vedic story that Vishnu once took three enormous steps and crossed the entire universe. Our task of traversing the physical realm to return to a transcendent state is comparable, with the extra one-half coil representing our human capacity for transcendence.

Kundalini sleeps facing downward with her mouth at the Brahma hole, also called the *Brahma dvara (*door of Brahma). It is essentially covered by the coils of the slumbering kundalini. Kundalini can be considered either poison or nectar. When poisonous, it is directed downward and leads the person into the darker and more mundane realms. When it is awakened, it is a nectar that enables an expansion toward divinity.

While she sleeps, kundalini is woven around a lingam, the sign of Shiva. A phallic symbol, the lingam is always a perfect ellipsoid, a shape that serves as a storehouse of ever-renewing energy. It is the symbol of ascending force in comparison with the Shakti symbol, which is a yoni, representing a descendent force. When pictured with a related chakra, the lingam is associated with an upward-facing triangle and the yoni with a downward-facing triangle. As well, a lingam is considered to be held within the triangle, or yoni. Together, these two symbols, which always appear together, suggest the unification of male and female as well as the merging of opposing forces —not only sexual but electromagnetic and natural as well.

The Third Kundalini Stage: Rising

The rising is an often topsy-turvy process for many reasons. One is that two sets of energetic blocks are standing guard. Three major lingas (similar in spelling to “lingam” but a different concept) operate like caps that kundalini must break through in order to ascend. Within the energetic structure, these three lingas represent the forms Shiva takes within the sushumna. Seen in this capacity, a linga is the name for the space in which the universe continually dissolves and forms.

The three lingas are the svayambhu linga, related to the first chakra; the bhana linga, associated with the fourth chakra; and the itara linga, linked to

the sixth chakra. Their presence encourages us to work through the challenges associated with these chakras so we don't remain stuck in their respective issues: materiality, the mind, and self-perception. The svayambhu linga, however, represents the first challenge, as it occupies the space where the sushumna attaches to the kanda, a secondary chakra considered to be the source of the nadis and the center of the astral body. Related to the first chakra, the kanda is physically situated between the anus and the root of the reproductive organ.

According to the *Sat-Chakra-Nirupana*, this linga is beautiful and similar to molten gold; its color and shape are analogous to a new leaf. The linga's head points downward within a small, inverted triangle, some say at the base of the vajra nadi, the sleeping kundalini blocking the linga's mouth. In other sources, however, such as the *Dhyana Bindu Upanishad*, the linga faces west and its head is split like a gem. No matter the details, when roused by contact with fire, mind, and vital force, the kundalini takes the form of a needle to pierce through the sushumna and unlock the linga.

There is yet another set of gates preventing the kundalini's ascension after arousal. These are the *granthi* (locks) that must be unwoven for the kundalini to continue undulating upward. Many experts, such as Woodroffe, believe that the lingas and granthi are the same. Yet others associate the lingas with the granthi and believe them interrelated but different, the granthi the apex or converging point of the tattvas related to their region.

The first grantha, situated at the base of the spine, is the Brahma granthi and represents Brahma, the god of creation. Kundalini energy cannot pass through this lock until it moves beyond the desires of the senses and manifestation. The Vishnu granthi is located at the fourth chakra. Vishnu is the god of preservation; here, a kundalini initiate must use compassion to serve others rather than only the self. Finally, the Rudra granthi resides at the sixth chakra. Rudra is Shiva as the god of destruction. The kundalini can ascend to the seventh chakra only after a person has embraced higher truths.

At this point, the *tattvas*—the twenty-four templates of form that make up worldly existence—can then collapse back into the elements that gave rise to

our creation through a process called *Laya yoga*, or discipline of dissolution. These tattvas include the five elements, each of which works with the gunas (forces of creation). As the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* explains, the elements associated with each chakra are reabsorbed into the ground of nature. The earth element of the first chakra is dissolved into smell; the water element of the second chakra disappears into taste; the fire element in the third chakra is disbanded into sight; the air element (sometimes called the wind element) of the fourth chakra transforms into touch; the ether element of the fifth chakra is refined by sound; and within the sixth chakra, the lower mind (*manas)* is dissolved into the higher mind (*buddhi*), which in turn dissolves into the matrix of nature, or *sukshma-prakriti*. Finally, in the seventh chakra, the subtle matrix of nature dissolves into the *para-bindu*, or the supreme point of origin. Once we have dissolved these learning tools—and binds—the kundalini can stretch into the infinite dimensions.[14]

It is best for the kundalini to ascend through the sushumna. Some sources believe it rises through the Brahma nadi and others believe it goes through the chitrini; both are nadis within the sushumna (see Illustration 43). As I will describe later in this section, there are multiple possibilities. The kundalini's rising path is dependent on many factors, including inherent issues and unconscious resistance. Ideally, however, the kundalini ascends through the sushumna, piercing each of the six chakras until it reaches a threefold knot called the triveni in the sixth chakra. This spot adjoins the medulla oblongata, the lower half of the brainstem that controls autonomic functions such as breathing and digestion, with the left and right sympathetic nervous systems.[15] It then graduates through several additional steps to merge with the divine masculine energy in the crown chakra. Then, according to many sources, it comes to rest in the sixth chakra, from which the merged energy of Shakti and Shiva now directs one's life.

As I have described, the kundalini rises from the first chakra and passes through the first linga and granthi. It can then shoot through several different nadis, including one of the two inner realms occupying the sushumna. At the

heart chakra, the kundalini must pass through its local linga and granthi. Here it also meets the hrit chakra, also called the celestial wishing tree.

The fifth chakra is a highly complex organ and is involved in both the rising and the post-rising integration. At the simplest level, it stores nectar in its own secondary chakra, the lalana. This nectar emanates from the bindu visarga, a secondary chakra often associated with the sixth or seventh chakra, which is located at the back of the head. Once a rising has completed, the seventh chakra emits a nectar called amrita, which has both poisonous and healthful aspects. It collects in the bindu visarga and is then dropped into the fifth chakra. When the throat chakra is inactive, the third chakra consumes the entirety of the amrita. When the person is awakened, the poisonous aspect of this nectar is burned up and the body uses the healthy or ambrosial aspects of the nectar. I have read studies that suggest kundalini, at nearly every stage, can affect a person's metabolism. Even more striking to me is my own experience as a practitioner and as someone who has undergone two kundalini experiences. When the throat chakra is inactive and the third chakra absorbs it, the metabolism is often sluggish and slow. If the throat chakra is engaged with the nectar, the metabolism is healthy and thriving.

After passing through the linga and granthi associated with the sixth chakra, the kundalini energy is handled by several secondary chakras, some of which are arguably associated with either the fifth or seventh chakra instead of the sixth. For instance, in some systems the source of the amrita is a soma chakra linked with the sixth chakra rather than the seventh. No matter; this chakra combines the three gunas and bindus to create higher virtues.

The sixth chakra is also frequently associated with the manas chakra, a mind center that is also sometimes linked with the third chakra. Suffice it to say that there are many lower and higher points within the sixth chakra that must process the kundalini for a full rising.

Before entering the seventh chakra, the kundalini must pass through the visarga bridge. I want to further define this term because it can be confusing. This bridge is sometimes called the bindu visarga; other times it is simply referred to as visarga. The term *bindu* is sometimes used as a stand-alone as

well, athough technically the bindu is a point within the bindu visarga. It is the point of creation at which the manifested reality emerged from the void, or unity. It is often considered a meeting place of opposites, where the finite and the infinite are separate but one. Note that in other writings you'll discover that there are two other types of bindus. A white bindu is affiliated with the sperm and the crown chakra, and a red bindu is tied into the first chakra. The union of these two forms of bindu material is equated with the marriage of Shiva and Shakti.

For our purposes in describing the rise of the kundalini, the kundalini passes through the bindu visarga, or the bridge, and into the brahmarandhra. The latter is the "hole of Brahman" that exists in the hollow space at the top of the head as well as the anterior fontanelle. In Tantra the bindu visarga, called the "falling of the drop," is usually affiliated with the back of the head (or anterior fontanelle) and found below the crown chakra and above the ajña. It is the source of bindu fluid, which can be either a nectar called amrita or a poison. (This same fluid, by the way, was referenced on the previous page in relation to the fifth chakra and the lalana. In a purified fifth chakra, the nectar is stored in the lalana and the poisons are burned away.) Once the kundalini reaches the brahmarandhra, enlightenment is confirmed. Depending on whether the person is ready or not (from a spiritual and physical point of view), the bindu fluid, which is symbolic, is released from the bindu visarga at this point.

There are many subplots in kundalini lore. Both the linga and the granthi cause the stirring of issues that must be addressed; added to this stimulation are the challenges inherent in the chakras. For instance, when the kundalini activates the first granthi, issues are triggered related to childhood abuse, addictions, questions about security and finances, greed, envy, and materialism—the very same issues we confront in the first chakra. As kundalini continues on her way, we must face the emotional and creativity issues laden in the second chakra and then the dysfunctional beliefs in the third chakra—and so on.

Recall, too, the associations of the chakras with the nerve plexuses, a

subject we've addressed throughout this book. As a reminder, the most common ideas presented in part 2 relate the first chakra to the sacrococcygeal plexus, the second to the sacral plexus, and the third to the solar plexus (which forms a junction between the right and left sympathetic nervous system chains related to the pingala and the ida and the cerebrospinal axis). The fourth chakra relates to the cardiac plexus, the fifth to the laryngeal plexus, and the sixth to the cerebellum and its related brain lobes. The seventh chakra follows and is often associated with the upper cerebrum and higher learning centers. Interspersed between these main chakras are many secondary ones. In order, these chakras are also linked respectively to the adrenal glands, sexual organs (ovaries and testes), pancreas, heart, and the thyroid, pituitary, and pineal glands. As the rising kundalini pierces the related chakras, it also stirs all the physical areas related to them. This means that by the time kundalini has completed its ascension, it will have purified the neurological, hormonal, and other systems of the body as per each related chakra.

Kundalini energy also alters or enhances the chakric substructures, potentially altering the intensity and direction of chakra spin as well as amplifying the lotuses, which house hidden seed alphabets on each petal. As the closed mouths of the nadis open around the chakras, the covering over the chakras is disintegrated, burned into ashes by kundalini's heat. The subsequent greater flow of prana increases the light within the chakras, and the sounds of the chakras—coded as letters of the Sanskrit alphabet—can now permeate the physical body. The light also assumes shapes, which take forms including gods and goddesses, yantras, and sound vehicles.[16]

The Symptoms Of A Kundalini Rising

Climbing to the stars isn't easy. Consider a phrase used in the *Goraksha Samhita* (1.47–51) to describe the entry of the kundalini into the nadi system: the practitioner must use vital energy to "smash" against the blocked energy, "breaking open" the door to liberation.[17] As could be expected, both the rising itself and the clearing associated with it can cause complex and confusing

symptoms. Lee Sannella, a medical doctor and well-known kundalini expert, groups the symptoms into the following categories, any or all of which could appear during a kundalini awakening:

Motor: Experiences that can be observed and physically measured. Includes jerks, spasms, vibrations, abnormal breathing, and sometimes paralysis.

Sensory: Inner reactions, including lights and sounds. Can include tingling; tickles; orgasmic sensations; heat or cold; inner lights and visions; sounds such as whistling, hissing, and voices; and pain, including headaches. Often caused by resistance to kundalini.

Interpretive: Involves mental processes that interpret experience. Includes unusual or extreme emotions, positive or negative; distortion of thoughts; detachment, or what is called "witness consciousness"; dissociation; hysteria; and "single seeing," when both eyes see as if through one eye, internally and externally.

Non-Physiological: Phenomena often psychic in orientation. These include out-of-body experiences and psychic perceptions. They can be a result of the cerebral current stimulating the motor cortex or thalamic centers, causing postures or paralysis and bodily sensations.[18]

The signs of a kundalini awakening often cause people to wonder if they are ill, disturbed, or just plain going crazy, especially when the physical symptoms correlate with emotional challenges. Modern research, upholding the ancient philosophy that emotions and the body are interconnected, provides us with a body atlas that shows where certain emotions show up in the body. According to researchers, there are statistically discrete areas of the body where various emotions appear, including happiness, contempt, and love, regardless of the nationalities tested. Illustration 56, which is also in the color insert, shows a few of these bodily areas and my own analysis based on chakra knowledge.[19]

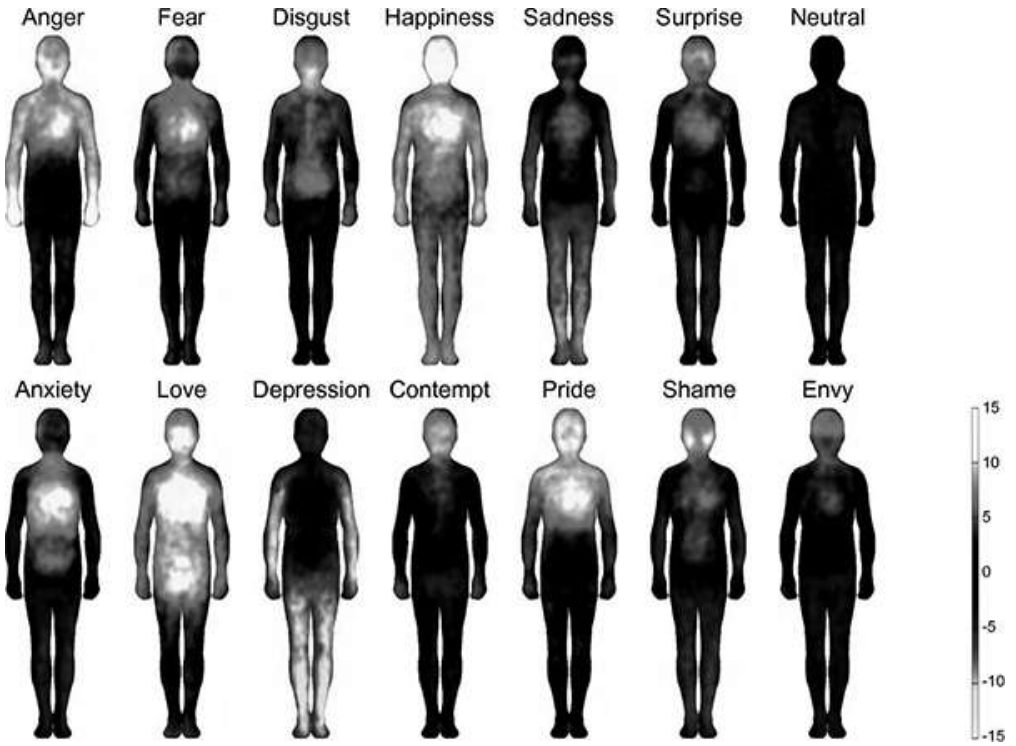


ILLUSTRATION 56—BODILY AREAS WHERE EMOTIONS APPEAR IN KUNDALINI SITUATIONS: The brighter areas reflect increased bodily sensations related to the emotions, and the darker areas reflect decreased bodily reactions; the darkest areas show no reaction at all. Love is centered in the physical heart. Anger is also in the heart as well as the hands, throat area, and feet. In chakra medicine anger is known to restrict the heart. The arms and hands are extensions of the heart chakra and it's obvious that the person is prepared to act out the anger as if through their fists. The throat area, related to the fifth chakra, is one of the areas through which we express anger, and the feet serve as an extension of the first chakra, reflecting the tendency of anger to stomp with this survival-based emotion. The highlighted head and heart of the happy person supports the fourth chakra as the center of joy and also the idea that the more conscious someone is in their higher chakras, the more bliss they can feel. The lack of brightness in the depressed person suggests a repression or closing of all the chakras, and the lighter eyes in the shameful person might link shame to the sixth chakra and the role of self-perception in producing shame. (See the insert for a color version of this image.) From "Bodily Maps of Emotions" by Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glerean, Riitta Hari, and Jari K. Hietanen, published in *Discover* 12/13/13; http://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/646. IMAGE COURTESY OF LAURI NUMMENMAA, ENRICO GLEREAN, RIITTA HARI, AND JARI K. HIETANEN.

Kundalini symptoms are often dependent upon the person's process but can also depend on the type of rising that is being experienced. These stages are

outlined on the next several pages. This is why it can be helpful to understand the scope and breadth of potential risings.

The Winding Routes Of Kundalini

There are six main routes kundalini can take on its upward climb and several ways that it can arise—or not. I have summarized these stages, aptly described at Patanjali Kundalini Yoga Care (PKYC; see kundalinicare.com), a website offering spiritual-development education on traditional kundalini teachings from India.

The best-trod paths for a rising are via the sushumna, vajra, chitrini, brahma, saraswati, and lakshmi nadis, with the most typical risings occurring on the sushumna, vajra, and saraswati roads. Ascension or stages of kundalini risings involving these pathways are as follows:

No Rising: The kundalini remains unreleased in the first chakra.

Kundalini Stirring: The kundalini is shaken but maintains its place at the mouth of the sushumna. The person might shake, weep, or otherwise react, but the kundalini doesn't make headway.

Kundalini Arousal: The kundalini uncoils and withdraws from the opening but is too weak to climb or face upward, toward the sushumna. The subject might be pulled into the darker aspects of the first chakra.

Kundalini Release: The kundalini uncoils and exits the first chakra. There is sufficient prana and focus for the kundalini to elevate to whatever chakra level it can achieve.

Partial Rising: The kundalini makes its way to the heart, having broken through the svayambhu linga, but it is stuck under the bhana linga. This kind of rising is unstable, and the kundalini keeps falling back to the first chakra.

Intermediate Rising: The kundalini rises through the sushumna and breaks through the bhana linga, finding the throat or lower brow, where it remains until it can break through the itara linga in the brow.

Deflected Rising: The kundalini is deflected at the get-go from entering the sushumna, entering instead the vajra nadi or the saraswati nadi, after which it rises immediately to the crown chakra. The resulting burst of inspiration is lost as the kundalini falls back to the first chakra and travels up and down this nadi, causing instability.

Faux Full Rising: The kundalini elevates through the sushumna and pierces the itara linga. Rather than proceeding to the higher point of the sixth chakra, however, it remains at a lower point. Here it can access the upper sankhini nadi but cannot continue rising. Individuals might now appear highly gifted with siddhi but aren't necessarily gaining in spiritual development.

Full Rising: The kundalini rises through the sushumna, breaks through the itara linga, and reaches the sixth chakra's highest point. It can now enter the upper nadis and the seventh chakra to reach the bindu, or pinnacle. One's spiritual life becomes blessed and purified, and old karma is purged.

Between the highest point of the sixth chakra and the bindu, the kundalini can take several routes. These include the following:

Upper Vajra Nadi: Causes a chakra-by-chakra purge from the highest part of the sixth chakra.

Upper Chitrini Nadi: Causes spontaneous bodily and breath patterns via the brahmarandhra.

Upper Brahma Nadi: Stimulates increased awareness through the granthi, triveni, and the hrit, a secondary heart chakra. This process eliminates karmic residue.

The completion of a rising must occur at the top of the crown chakra and involve five additional steps, all undertaken in the brahmarandhra and culminating in the blossoming of the chitrini nadi. At this point the kundalini enters into spiritual communion with the visarga, the last part of the Brahma nadi, and merges with pure consciousness at the bindu, the pinnacle of the

crown chakra. (As explored earlier in this chapter, the bindu is a point within the visarga and bridge; these two terms are often combined.) This marks the end of the rising but not the completion of spiritual development, which will continue.

There are a couple of other possible routes worth mentioning. These include a direct kundalini rising from the first chakra to the bindu through the chitrini nadi or the Brahma nadi. Such a release into these holiest of pathways culminates in a complete process at the bindu. If such a rising occurs through the chitrini nadi, the kundalini will stop at each chakra. If the kundalini rises through the Brahma nadi, it ascends immediately to the bindu.

Yet other possibilities are ascribed to the left-hand tantric practices (described in chapter 18) and occur between two vowed partners. If one partner has had a vajra nadi rising, the intensity of the other partner can divert the kundalini to the sushumna at the first chakra and then elevate it to the throat chakra. It is now rediverted to the vajra nadi at the throat chakra's amrita point, where it touches the makara, a point in the upper sixth chakra that serves as a sort of "base camp" to stabilize the kundalini. From this point it ascends to the bindu via the brahmarandhra through the upper chitrini and then upper Brahma nadis. The result is profound ecstasy and an elevated capacity of the mind. More rarely, the kundalini is shifted from the vajra nadi into the chitrini nadi and then the Brahma nadi at the first chakra. Either of these diversions is called the *kuala marga vajra* diversion process.

What happens after kundalini reaches the bindu? It establishes a temporary camp around, below, or at the bindu and travels upward into the bindu, seeking what some call the omega (ending) or samadhi experience. This process is often called a plateau experience, as it involves continual transitioning into enlightenment or moksha. There are three stages in the plateau phase, as follows:

Shuddha Beha: Purification of the body

Pranava Beha: Improvement of the mind and brain

Jnana Beha: Refinement of higher intelligence

Finally one achieves liberation, the eternal union of the soul with the One. This aspirant can now be called a realized saint, sage, yogi, or adept. Those truly liberated become a *jivanmukti,* or liberated being. Each realized being is unique and is able to maintain some presence on the celestial planes while merging with pure consciousness. Many such beings continue to serve humankind and the world.[20]

The Fourth Kundalini Stage: Integration

Integrating the kundalini is a lifelong process, one that doesn't end with the achievement of kundalini energy reaching the bindu. We don't stop processing the many feelings, perceptions, and philosophies stimulated by a full rising simply because Shakti and Shiva have merged. In fact, now that we are reborn, we must learn to live again.

We must learn how to ethically incorporate our new siddhi and awarenesses. We must relate to people in a different way, potentially grieving lost relationships and opening to new ones. We might reexamine our purpose, needs, and self-identity. Throughout this lifelong journey, kundalini remains as a guide.

Despite the stress involved in making so many changes, one of the likely adjustments to liberated kundalini energy is quite exciting: it involves enjoying better health. One set of breakthrough studies that underscore this point was conducted in 2011 by Dr. Krishna Shama Rao at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences and Dr. Smiths-Hegde at Mangalore University. Their findings repeated those from a 2008 study by Dr. Jeffery A. Dusck at Harvard Medical School. According to the 2011 studies, the benefits from twenty-one initiation sessions by Paramahamsa Nithyananda in India were formidable and included these physical impacts:

- A maximum of 40 percent increase in cellular energy.
- Healing of physical ailments and the immune system, including significant weight loss, recovery from eating disorders and chronic fatigue, and significant (over 70 percent) alleviation of arthritis, asthma, and headache symptoms in those with these issues.

- Enhanced psychological health as revealed by an overall decreased dependency on medication and enhanced sense of well-being. Seventy-five percent of the students studied reported recovery from issues particular to them, including depression, phobias, insomnia, insecurity, and panic attacks.
- Neurological shifts in the brain, with a higher incidence of delta waves, the wave frequently associated with samadhi.
- Genetic transformation was suggested through an increased immunity to cancer and improvement in immune modulation, along with a boost of extraordinary psychic abilities such as clairvoyance, healing, telepathy, and more.[21]

To further enhance these and other results, it's helpful to continue engaging in yoga disciplines, all of which have been proven to achieve amazing outcomes such as relieving pain, improving stress-related disorders, and aiding people in recovery from addictions. Furthermore, conducting chakra medicine exercises also decreases blood pressure, heart and breathing rates, depression, and anger, and it helps heal heart irregularities.[22] Dietary, meditative, and yogic exercises result in profound anti-aging benefits and can even relieve dyslexia, grief, insomnia, and phobias.[23] And if you're just looking to kick back, muscle stress in study participants decreased 58 percent when they employed kundalini yoga techniques.[24]

Why do kundalini practices ultimately create these and other terrific outcomes? To answer this question, let's look at kundalini from a scientific perspective, showing just how physical the process really is.

The Universal Nature of Kundalini

Over the centuries, the term *kundalini* has transcended the barriers of religion and ethnicity. These days you can attend a yoga class in nearly any corner of the world to raise your kundalini. You can suggest in a coffee shop that your "kundalini

is burning" and receive a nod of understanding. What is less well known is the fact that numerous ancient and modern cultures, religions, and spiritual groups have embraced kundalini concepts. They might call them by different names, but the effects are the same.

For starters, kundalini is present in the scriptures of the world's three largest religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—as a fire and in the form of a serpent. Consider the story of the prophet Moses, who encountered kundalini in the form of the burning bush on a desert mountain. After being told to take off his sandals on sacred ground, he received instructions on how to free his people, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt.[25] Then, when his people lost faith during the resulting exodus, God told him: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, and looketh upon it, shall live."[26] Thus is the serpent, a common representation of kundalini, described in healing and transformational terms. Other concurrent communities in the ancient Middle East also worshipped the serpent image; bronze and stone serpent artifacts have been discovered all over the region, with many projecting erotic associations on the serpent.

Within Jewish mysticism the energy of the feminine divine is called Shekkina; in Islam the universal energy is called Rh. In the system of Salaat, the kundalini yoga of Islam, it is acknowledged that the ancient Arabs believed that Allah had a divine female counterpart called Al-at, a name that is interchangeable with Salaat. A burning force, this serpent power activates a solar power in the spine. And in Christianity kundalini is often compared to the Holy Spirit in ways I'll describe in the last part of this discussion, "Kundalini and the Christian Tradition."

All three of these major religions also state that people were originally created out of red dirt or clay, signifying the forming of

the body out of fire. The first man, like the first syllable of the holy name of God, Jehova, was called Yod, which means the Flame, the Cause, and the One. The second letter of Jehova's name is He, which is feminine. From these come Vau, or "son," then a final He, or "daughter." These syllables are all Hebrew letters. In many Judaic traditions the Hebraic letters are considered holy, just as Sanskrit letters were to the East Indians. Herein we find the ultimate story of the male and female aspects of the Divine and of ourselves, of the meeting of Shakti and Shiva in sacred marriage.

In Taoism, the primordial power is feminine. Lao Tze describes kundalini as the spirit of the valley through which flows the sushumna. This spirit never dies. It is, rather, a miniature form of the energy of creation that links us to the Divine. According to Chinese Taoist traditions, prana accumulates in the lower belly and then bursts out, only to flow into the main channels of the body, causing involuntary movements as well as eight physical sensations: pain, itching, coldness, warmth, weightlessness, heaviness, roughness, and smoothness. The vital element is heat. And in Buddhism, Lord Buddha speaks about a middle path for achieving nirvana, or ultimate peace. Many experts believe he was describing the sushumna, through which the kundalini ascends. Later Buddhist masters considered this path of liberation the greatest secret of all, and knowledge about it was transmitted to only a few disciples.[27]

On the African continent, the !Kung people of the Kalahari still practice an age-old tradition of dancing in the desert for hours to heat up their n/um, the energy comparable to Hindu prana and Chinese chi, thus achieving a state equivalent to kundalini rising. The n/um, having achieved a critical heat in the pit of the stomach through dance, warms up and rises from the base of the spine to the skull. The n/um master can now perform healing,

walk on fire, and enjoy X-ray vision over long distances.[28] And in a modern esoteric school of Africa, the uroboros, pictured as a snake swallowing its tail, generates heat in the lower abdomen in response to breathing practices. In a manner similar to practices found in yoga, a practitioner first focuses on their perineal area and then directs the energy upward to the back of the head. The serpent energy now curls over the skull, goes through the center of the head to the forehead, splits at the eyes, and travels down the sides of the nose and upper lip to meet at the chin. From there it descends through the front of the throat, through the breastbone, and ends in the lower abdomen. The objective of this practice is to see a light in the head, representing enlightenment.[29]

As we've already established in earlier chapters, however, the serpent symbol—the symbolic signature of kundalini—has been found around the world. The god Quetzalcoatl, a major figure in the Aztec religion, was pictured as a feathered serpent. In European cultures during the Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Chalcolithic time periods, the goddess was commonly depicted with the body of a bird and neck of a serpent. As well, the Egyptian goddess Buto is frequently depicted as a cobra with wings,[30] and the image of a dragon, often compared to a serpent or reptile, has been featured across time in Jewish and Christian cultures and the cultures of Japan, Vietnam, Mesopotamia, Persia, central Europe, Greece, and South, East, and West Asia.[31]

Horned serpents appear in the mythologies of many Native American tribes, including the Cree, Shawnee, Hopi, Ojibwe, Cherokee, Abenaki, Navajo, Choctaw, Sioux, and Dakota.[32] As in many cultures, North American tribes often saw the world as a mix of supportive and detrimental forces. Serpents, in whatever form, could be considered either or both, depending on the culture.[33]

The allusion between the kundalini and the caduceus, the

Grecian staff upon which two entwined snakes reach toward wings with which to fly, however, suggest kundalini energy as healer. This is the staff of Hermes, the Greek messenger god who brings guidance and messages. In the Greek tradition it is also the rod of the physician Asclepius and, as such, depicts the art of medicine.[34] Here, too, is the symbol of our own DNA, the double helix that governs our lives, health, and emotions. This symbol was also the sign of an ancient Mesopotamian creator god EA or ENKI, known as the chief of magicians and the serpent in the Garden of Eden, who encoded wisdom into humans' genes; thus some believe him a positive, not malevolent, being.[35]

No matter our historical roots, the serpent's sting always brings transformation.

Kundalini and the Christian Tradition

One of the least understood relationships in our discussion is between kundalini and Christianity. In my research, however, I have found that mainstream and noncanonical Christian scriptures alike allude to concepts similar to the Hindu understanding of kundalini. Foremost is the analogy of kundalini as a mother—and the Holy Spirit as the same.

Kundalini is clearly a feminine spirit in the Hindu and related traditions. Considered the Divine Mother, kundalini is tidily portrayed in the *Yoga Kundalini Upanishad* through this praise: "Glory to the Mother Kundalini, who, through her Infinite Grace and Power, kindly leads the Sadhaka from Chakra to Chakra… and makes him realise his identity with the Supreme Brahman!"[36]

In the same vein the Holy Spirit of the Old Testament is maternal, and there are signs that Jesus continued this tradition. Case in point: the term *ruah*, sometimes written as *Ruah HaKodesh* or *ruach*, references the Holy Spirit in the Christian Old Testament and Jewish Torah. In Semitic languages such as

Hebrew, the language of the Jews, and Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, it is a feminine term. So is the term *shekhinah*, which references the presence of God in the Hebrew Bible; this word is also used in its Arabic form for the same reason in the Koran. In fact, out of the eighty-four Old Testament uses of the word *spirit* that reference the Holy Spirit, it is either feminine or neutral seventy-five times.[37]

By the time the Christian church underwent doctrinal controversies in the late fourth century, the Holy Spirit had become male. The feminine Holy Spirit lingered longest among the Syrian Christians in Edessa, the site where many well-known books of the Apocrypha were composed or edited.

In books from this area, including the gospels of Thomas and Philip and the Acts of Thomas, Jesus and his followers reference the Holy Spirit as feminine. For example, in the third-century Acts of Thomas, an account of the apostle Thomas's travels to India, certain prayers invoke the Holy Spirit as the "mother of all creation" and the "compassionate mother." In the gnostic Gospel of Thomas, Jesus asserts that his true mother gave him life. In the Gospel of Philip, a gnostic text recovered at Nag Hammadi, the Holy Spirit is repeatedly revered as a mother figure.[38] Perhaps the most beautiful rendering of the Syriac theology is found in the Acts of Thomas, 2:27:

Come, compassionate mother;

Come, fellowship of the male;

Come thou (feminine) that dost reveal the hidden mysteries;

Come, mother of the seven houses, that thy rest may be in the eighth house.[39]

I can't help but see the seven chakras in this passage, with the eighth representing enlightenment.

Kundalini is a complicated mother. Kind and benevolent, she is also flammable and explosive. Her purpose is to ignite, purify,

and then leave us cleansed and renewed, with our spiritual gifts at the forefront. Her primary objective, however, is for us to recognize the spirit within through a sort of second birth or a rebirth—the goal of Jesus's teachings.

We've already established kundalini as a sacred and inner fire; metaphors frequently include "flowing light" or "liquid fire."[40] The *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* provides complete instructions for "kindling the fire of kundalini,"[41] and in the *Katha Upanishad* it is said that the sacred fire is well concealed, just like a "child in the womb of the mother," as is our own soul.[42] The purpose of igniting this sometimes harsh teacher is clear in the most ancient of Eastern texts, including the Vedas: to attain the truth and become self-realized. Such a realized person is a *jnani* (knower); they are *dwajaha* or "twice born," first from a human mother and the earthly plane, and secondarily as a child of the Divine Mother.[43] If anything, because of her placement within us, she is a personal mother. We cannot perceive this one-on-one love until our soul is purified and we have evolved into a "body of love."[44]

Hence, we do not wait to achieve paradise after death; we have the means to be embraced in unity while we live. The siddhis, or special gifts, are a natural extension of personal enlightenment. Therefore, explains Gopi Krishna (a well-known Indian sage who wrote extensively about kundalini), kundalini is the energy responsible for genius. But we are not to use this gift only for personal gain, he warns, nor cultivate kundalini only for its extrasensory benefits. As he points out, the same gifts can be attained through drugs or spells. This means that the super powers, magical as they are, are the companion to, not precursor of, religion. The true goal is self-knowledge and, therefore, self-improvement, which leads to caring for others.[45] Thus, we spy several themes. Kundalini is a Divine Mother who cares for us personally, operating like a fire to allow the cleansing necessary

for a spiritual rebirth. This rebirth leads to self-realization and the ability to perceive heaven on earth, activating gifts that allow us to further this perception and grow in compassion and love for self and others. The same elements are present in Jesus's words.

We have already established that God is related to fire in the Old Testament. Consider the burning bush of Moses; while Moses was leading the Israelites through the desert, the Lord sent a column of fire by night so the people could travel even in the dark.[46] In Ezekiel we find a flashing fire from which emerged a glowing metal,[47] and in Daniel God sits upon a throne made of fire. A stream of fire issues forth, and Daniel can see all those who serve God.[48] God purifies the prophets, and those who stand in front of him, such as the seraphim, glow as if burning. St. Francis of Assisi understood these images when he prayed to be "illumined by the fire of the Holy Spirit" to be able to follow God's will.[49]

We can now open the pages of the New Testament and stand with Jews from every nation as "tongues of fire" drop from the heavens and come to rest on each Jew. It is Pentecost, and the recipients of this (feminine) Holy Spirit speak in tongues and display gifts according to their nature.[50] Here is the flame that brings rebirth and, along with it, the potent gifts of the spirit that are present after an enflamed cleansing.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks frequently about the need to be reborn.[51] This is accomplished through the Holy Spirit, which we've established as feminine. This rebirth brings many benefits, among them guidance of truth;[52] purification and the animation of our spirit in-body; [53] teaching; [54] empowering of service; [55] a new nature of eternal life; [56] and the awakening of spiritual gifts according to our personality. These can include teaching, prophecy, encouraging, meeting others' needs,

leadership, showing mercy,[57] performing miracles,[58] healing,[59] and more.

What is the purpose of this rebirth? In line with the Vedic scripture, Jesus emphasized self-realization. As he said in the Gospel of Thomas, "When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living Father."[60] This process of enlightenment isn't to prepare us for death. Rather, it is to realize that "the Kingdom of God is within you."[61]

As we can see, kundalini is frankly the gift of the Divine Mother to us all, regardless of religion. As is shared in the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, a gnostic work written as if by God, kundalini—and the Christian Holy Spirit—is the "thought that dwells in the Light," she who existed before all. She is our womb and the voice that leads us into life.[62]

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Kundalini in the Body: The Science of the Shakti

While chakra medicine concerns itself with the subtle energy flowing throughout and surrounding the body, Shakti's energy is also extraordinarily physical, as you will see in the following examination of the neurology, hormones, and electromagnetic activity involved in a kundalini rising. Because kundalini is essentially a full-body phenomenon, it affects everything in the body. Here I will highlight what I believe are the most important effects of kundalini awakening in the body, starting with a key differentiation between prana and kundalini from energetic and scientific points of view.

Distinguishing Prana and Kundalini

But before we move into the "straight science" of the matter, let's take a moment to address one of the arguments—or points of discussion—we find in esoteric communities: the energetic and biological distinction between

prana and kundalini. Like so many answers in metaphysical circles, the answer to whether they differ seems to be *maybe*.

Let's first cover various perspectives on prana. Prana is life energy, known by other names in various cultures—among them mana, chi, orgone, and ki. Basically, prana exists where there is life. It is the light switch that animates matter so spirit can enter and occupy it.

Another way to explain prana is as the invisible bioenergy responsible for the creation of matter. Though a subtle energy, it serves as a medium for physical energy, such as electromagnetic radiation, gravity, and more. This means that heat, light, electricity, and magnetism are all actually manifestations of prana.[63]

But prana does even more than this. It is the sum of all hidden and manifested energies in the universe. It lies in motionless form in areas of the unmanifested cosmos, but when the vibration is correct, prana moves. It then acts upon space (akasha) and brings about form. This means that everything in the universe is a combination of prana, or movement, and akasha, or space.

All forces, including prana, spring from the same source, called atman in Sanskrit. Just as atman disperses into different powers and forms, so does prana, which assumes five different forms. One of these five forms—just to further confuse the matter—is also called prana. The others are apana, samana, udana, and vyana. Respectively, these five forces represent the area of the heart and respiration (prana); the region between the lower abdomen and the anus and excretion (apana); the navel area and digestion (samana); the throat and the functions of swallowing, creating sleep, and separating the self from the physical body at death (udana); and the all-pervading energy that circulates the blood (vyana).[64]

Many types of energies and powers naturally flow through the nadis, and prana is one of them. This breath of life flows from the pranamaya kosha, serving as the life energy pulsing through these channels. Some people believe that the chakras are actually formed from the nadis, which would enhance the belief that prana is everywhere, even inside the chakras.[65]

Kundalini is a more defined and purposeful type of energy than is raw

prana. As shamanic expert Mircea Eliade explains in his book *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, kundalini is experienced as a "big fire," an internal heat.[66] It is more explicitly involved in the specific task of activating the chakras, while prana seems to be an all-purpose energy.

From a biological viewpoint, kundalini relates to the microcurrents in our bodies. In a theory formulated by scientist Itzhak Bentov, kundalini activation actually begins with a shift in the aorta, the largest artery in the body. When a person such as a meditator reaches a certain level of consciousness, an energetic wave is formed in the aorta. This wave travels down the body to the pelvis and through the legs, eventually undulating all the way through the body to the top of the head. It results in magnetic fields above the head that often accompany the signatures of enlightenment such as the activation of the siddhi, or supernatural powers, and the sense of bliss and peace. This is one way to explain kundalini as a state of superconsciousness, a way of magnetically and bioelectrically attuning with the universe.[67]

Other research ties kundalini symptoms to hormonal shifts and changes that occur in the brain. Kundalini practices result in increased intuitive awareness, telepathy, social functioning, and relaxation.[68] Additional observations have tied kundalini's undulating and spiraling turns to the spiraling low-energy electromagnetism that has been scientifically validated to ensure form, growth, and development in nature.[69]

So far, the ideas I have presented suggest that prana is a universal energy and kundalini, while important, is a more limited one. Prana exists everywhere, and kundalini lies dormant until activated. Many spiritual practices also infer that kundalini activations often follow the increased infusion of prana through the nadis, frequently through practices involving purification, body poses, and breathing exercises. This would suggest that kundalini might be a separate energy from prana.

However, various experts argue that the following might also be the case:

- Prana and kundalini are the same. We experience prana differently than we do the fire of kundalini only because we perceive them

differently.

- We are actually aiming for a "pranic awakening," not a kundalini awakening. According to these proponents, kundalini is a block and must be cleared to make way for the ease and smoothness of prana.[70]

I would propose that we return to the idea of atman, or a universal source. Prana is one expression of the source; so is kundalini. Fundamentally, all energy comes from source—and returns to source. Perhaps this is what is most important to remember.

The Neurology and Hormonal Activity of Kundalini

When it comes to kundalini, it isn't easy to separate the effects on neurological and hormonal systems, as they are interdependent—so I won't. Instead, I'll describe a few of the many neurological and hormonal complexities involved in a kundalini transformation.

During a kundalini shift the body undergoes profound effects, especially in the autonomic system, which has been correlated with both the chakras and the nadis. Most people are unaware of their autonomic system, which regulates many bodily functions without our conscious involvement. Ideally, however, a kundalini transformation leads to eventual self-control, as evidenced by the fact that enlightened yogis can deliberately shift their autonomic functioning.[71]

Demonstrating this ability was a group of Buddhist monks, who were observed raising their bodily temperatures through focused breathing and lowering their metabolism by 64 percent. High in the Himalayas, another group of monks was able to dry wet, cold sheets in frigid air with their body heat alone.[72] Accompanying this physical skill are all the others we've been discussing, from the ability to access spiritual gifts to the awareness of oneness.

The physical metamorphosis is often anything but easy or simple, however. In many ways it is similar to the rebirth experienced by the caterpillar in the cocoon. Before it becomes a butterfly, most of the encased caterpillar's cells break down and literally "melt" before turning into undifferentiated cells,

called imaginal cells. These eventually create the beautiful butterfly.[73] As you can imagine, such a radical transformation could be a painful and frightening process.

Basically, a kundalini awakening occurs in nested cycles that can be divided into alarm and recovery states. Respectively, these states involve the sympathetic and then parasympathetic nervous systems, which continually vie for first place. I can't emphasis enough this dual—and dueling—role of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems, which meet in the first chakra, the typical initiation point for a kundalini arousal. This area is fed by several nerves, arteries, and veins, and it directly influences the nervous system through chemical messages in the blood. The hormonal, circulatory, sympathetic, parasympathetic, and immune systems connect here. Located at the base of the spine, the first chakra is positioned perfectly to stimulate maximum nerve excitation, such as during sex or stress, supercharging the body with nitric oxide and other neurotransmitters and loading the spine with glutamate, calcium, and other excitatory ions.

The base of the spine is also rich in gap junctions, which I introduced in the last chapter. Here is the filum terminale, the terminal filament of the spinal cord, which runs from the brain to the coccyx. At least in part, kundalini is a subjective representation of the changes among polar molecules in the central nervous system, which rise from the filum terminale to the brain. In this framework the sushumna is a column of gap junction–linked cells; the gap junctions open as kundalini energy rises. The sushumna is also part of a network of glial nerve cells that extends through the spine and brain. Practices such as meditation and yoga increase the prevalence of gap junctions and integrate the glial network, allowing a full electrical unification of the spine and brain—or kundalini rising.

Within this context, once the kundalini arouses, the sympathetic nervous system sets off a chain of reactions. Energy passes upward along the spine or sushumna, opening gap junctions, as well as through the two sympathetic trunks, the ida and pingala, that cross the nerve plexuses, or chakras, in double-helix fashion. But as soon as the sympathetic system takes over—and

burnout follows—our parasympathetic system kicks in, causing the emanation of hormones such as vasopressin and oxytocin, which bring peace and calm.

Here is our chakra ladder, the staircase to the heavens between the first and seventh chakras.

As I examine the two primary kundalini states of alarm and recovery, you will spot within them the reasons for so many of the symptoms people experience when undergoing kundalini arousal and transformation, from heat and tingling to exhaustion and joy.

The Alarm State Of The Kundalini Shake-Up

The alarm state is sympathetic in nature and can lead to peak experiences, including heightened stimulation of the adrenals and the production of related "flight, fight, or freeze" neurochemicals and hormones, including adrenaline, cortisol, histamine, and testosterone—the latter potentially accounting for the reported increase in sexual feelings and a hormonal sequence that eventually leads to personal bliss. The sympathetic system is on high alert while the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis fires up, and the sympathetic nerves constrict blood vessels in the skin and fascia, increase heart rate, and cause faster breathing. They also dilate blood vessels in the skeletal muscles and increase blood sugar. Basically, these internal chemical stressors stop cellular division and growth, effectively dimming the hippocampus, which relates to memory, and the prefrontal cortex, necessary for rational thinking. However, the release of hormones from the adrenals, which are mainly corticosteroids, mobilizes the body against invading germs or foreign proteins. In this way, kundalini stress activates the immune system, helping the body begin building a new version of itself, which is incredibly stressful.

During the most intense part of the alert stage, macrophages—white blood cells in the tissues—work overtime to cleanse the body, an action that stimulates the production of more nitric oxide. Nitric oxide is a weapon against infection that also regulates blood pressure and stops muscle contraction. It also serves as a gatekeeper of blood flow to the organs. The

immune system generates peptides and catabolic enzymes, which dissolve and transform tissue. The blood vessels become more permeable, and we quite literally experience the bodily and chakra cleanse on a systemic level.

While they are engaged, the macrophages release interleukin-1, which regulates immune and inflammatory responses to infections. The interleukin travels to the hypothalamus and increases the body's temperature. One of the main symptoms of kundalini is heat, which can last anywhere from a few hours to, astonishingly, several years. This increased heat supports the immune system by cleaning the body of microbes. It can also be one of the reasons that the awakened feel tingling, especially on the left side of the body, as well as an electrical flow in the spine. An increase in glutamate also overstimulates the brain and hyperactivity in the cells.

I've found that the heat can sometimes be confused with pre-menopausal or menopausal symptoms and, at the least, can overstimulate the hot flashes experienced in these stages. I had one client go into menopause at age thirty following a kundalini activation. Other clients believe that menopause stimulated the rising of their kundalini. I believe this occurs because biologically women move into their power after they are finished with the child-rearing years.

If not countered, these intense bodily reactions and hyperarousal of hormones and neurotransmitters can eventually lead to prolonged hypothyroid and an inhibition of the enzyme needed to convert T4 to T3, causing thyroid issues as well as prolonged exposure to too much estrogen in women. Within the correct thyroid conversion, an increase in cholesterol can occur, as can other stress-related conditions in the body. The results may include burnout or exhaustion and damage from too many free radicals, which aren't being eliminated. Some experts also believe that people who are emotionally immature, lacking the proficiency or help needed to process the stirred-up emotions and stress, can experience great highs and lows, similar to bipolar disorder. Coming to the rescue is the body's parasympathetic system, which, if turned on, can start repairing and building up the body, enabling growth on every level.

The Recovery State—The Kundalini Shakedown

Balancing the alarm state is the recovery state, a relative rest period. Moving us into the recovery state are our opiate receptors, which respond to the presence of nitric oxide. Nitric oxide, along with the opiates, can create a sense of bliss—a welcome pause, a comma in the so-far troublesome kundalini process. Meanwhile, within the cells, lysosomes, which digest unwanted material, now start repairing cellular damage. This is important for the neurons and the overall nervous system, as neurons employ the lysosomes to act as their waste disposal system. Lysosomes, however, only degrade certain chemicals, ignoring neurotransmitters including serotonin, GABA, and amino acids, which can now flood the synapses.

Serotonin and GABA are inhibitory. While the immune and other systems have been getting excited, the presence of inhibitory neurotransmitters—including serotonin and GABA as well as glycine, endorphins, adenosine, and taurine—work toward stopping the excitement; thus begins the rest period. The body starts downshifting from the hypervigilance of the sympathetic system as the brainstem stimulates a strong parasympathetic response to meet the extreme sympathetic activity.

Part of the downshift involves turning on the dorsal vagus complex (DVC), a cluster of nerves in the brainstem medulla that slows down the loss of energy. The heart expands because of the activity between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems and supports the activity of the DVC. Only when the parasympathetic system wins the battle do we relax. During the parasympathetic periods we experience growth because of increased cell division. Individuals report that they feel like they are glowing. Our heart entrains to the body, which can support the piercing of the second granthi and linga if the kundalini has risen this far. The heart is a major endocrine gland, and its electrical field is sixty times greater in amplitude than the brain's. Its magnetic field is five thousand times greater than the brain's.[74] Once our heart assumes dominance, love rules.

Until the kundalini is completely risen, the sympathetic nervous system kicks back in and we once again experience the tighter breathing and contractions associated with panic and hypervigilance, along with hyperactivity and emotional stress. These nesting cycles continue until the kundalini climbs into the higher spiritual chakras.

At this point, I add the enlightening state to the alarm and recovery states, describing what occurs when Shakti starts to merge with Shiva in the pineal gland. Physiologically, the pineal gland is near the center of the brain on the left side of the brow. It contains the same rods and cones as do the eyes—one of the reasons that people often start to receive transcendental visions at this point. It also secretes hormones that are vital to our health and well-being, including those that help us attain psychic insights.

Once the kundalini arrives in this area, many people testify to seeing a white light. One way to explain this is that the kundalini process stimulates the occipital lobe, which contains the visual cortex. By now, the rise in pituitary hormones, nitric oxide, histamine, dopamine, phenylethylamine, and other biochemicals has increased blood flow to the brain—and has also increased the biophotons generated by the brain and pineal gland in particular. Yet another reason for this increased sensitivity is that the gap junctions in the spine cause the production of inhibitory neurotransmitters, which contribute to the oscillation of electrical activity in the brain. We are now set up for increased spiritual activity in the higher chakra areas. This can be more thoroughly explained through our next discussion of kundalini and EMF.[75]

Kundalini's Electromagnetic Capacities

We've already established the body and its subtle anatomy as electromagnetic or frequency based. The presence of neuropeptides, ions, and other biochemicals is responsible for bioelectrical functioning in the body; powerful electrostasis fields exist in nearly every bodily tissue. These affect the body's neurons, which, in turn, alter what is occurring in cell membranes, making the body a huge intercellular network.

Because of this bioelectrical processing, our body itself is actually a dipole magnet, with the north pole located in the center of the brain and the south pole at the genitals. Here we have the polarization between the crown chakra or Shiva and the first chakra or Shakti. This polarity exists even at conception. The truth of this was recognized by twentieth-century researcher Harold Burr, a scientist at Yale Medical School, who remarked on the two poles of a tiny zygote. This polar opposition is coded into our cells and the systems of our body, and it establishes a difference between the left and right sides of our body, chakras, hemispheres, and more.

The spine is the connecting channel of bioelectrical power transmitted from the brain to the organs. The upper end of the cord is positively charged and the lower end is negatively charged. In the context of the chakras, those related to the pineal, pituitary, and hypothalamus, as well as the brahmarandhra and the crown overall, are part of the north or upper pole and receive cosmic signals and ESP transmissions.[76] We can now see a bigger picture of the relationship between the lower chakras and the higher chakras and the emanation of toruslike fields from and around the body. From the smallest ions, which cause the body to be an electrical ionization machine, to the emanation of EMF waves, we could be said to be nothing more (or less) than oscillating fields of energy.

During a kundalini process, the negative and positive polarities become more pronounced, increasing the ion exchanges in the body. As the numbers of these exchanges rise, so do the number and intensity of electrical charges. The subsequent increase in enzymatic action and oxygen use forces the production of more ATP and boosts glucose metabolism, thereby increasing the energy in the body and the flow of EMF.

The spine in particular becomes more ionized during a kundalini awakening; the fluid within it supercharges with ions as well as neuropeptides. Saturated with ions, endorphins, glutamate, nitric acid, and other neurotransmitters, this fluid not only circulates through the spine—and through it into organs and tissues—but also into the brain, further "electrifying" the bloodstream. One name for this fluid is amrita, the nectar

mentioned in most esoteric Hindu literature that accompanies the enlightenment process.

Once this electrified fluid spreads, it relaxes the body and sends wave pulses between the negative and positive poles in the body, such as those that occur in the neurons, with the inside of the neuron representing the negative pole and the outside, the positive pole. Within this context ions can be positively or negatively charged and are found in the intracellular and extracellular fluid of the neurons. This altered voltage, spreading across the nerve membranes, opens channels that allow various ions, such as calcium ions, to enter the neurons. When positively charged ions enter the negatively charged neuron, the negative inner "space" becomes positive and an electrical nerve impulse is discharged. This increased electrical current further alters the cellular membrane and furthers the superfluid, highly charged state.

One of the manifestations of this increased electrical state is an enhancement of vortex energies in the body. As author and researcher Itzhak Bentov explains it, the two poles of the EMF in the body find the shortest distance between them and unite through the sushumna. Years ago, other researchers determined that lines of force emanate from the bodily north poles, enter the opposite side, and cause a spiral, forming spinning vortexes along the positive-negative axis of the spine. We now perceive the weaving helix of the ida and pingala from an EMF point of view as these nadis cross the nerve plexuses or chakras, as well as an increased movement in the toruslike shapes of everything from red blood cells to electromagnetic fields inside and outside of the body. Kundalini greatly intensifies all these movements. As other researchers assert, you've only to insert a single ion into one of the body's vortexes to create a powerful EMF. During kundalini activity, the increased ionization of the bodily fluids amplifies this process, causing a stupendous increase in the EMF emanating from and surrounding the body.[77]

In a nutshell, the greater the kundalini activity, the stronger our EMF; the stronger our EMF, the more intense is our kundalini experience. And the opposite is also true: the stronger our EMF, the more stimulated we are by

external factors that, in turn, increase our kundalini activation. For instance, as the kundalini rises into the head, the magnetic sensing materials in the ethnoid bones in the sinuses, near the pituitary and pineal glands, are better able to respond to the energy picked up by the larger electromagnetic fields. Even the way a person's head is facing can affect what occurs in the body. The body's EMF is also affected by hundreds of other factors, however, including solar and lunar impacts on the atmosphere.[78] It is logical to assume that the more intense our EMFs, the more interaction occurs between others and ourselves—down to the DNA. The exception, I have found, occurs in individuals with extraordinarily thin EMF fields. When they are meager to the point of nonexistence, the energetic boundaries around the body can't keep outside stimulation away. Because of this, too-thin energetic boundaries can fan an already intense kundalini. The goal of a kundalini experience, however, isn't to simply become more vulnerable to energetic changes or others' energies; it is to be able to direct our own energy toward a positive end.

A Summative EMF Theory

Itzhak Bentov ties together everything I've stated so far about EMF and kundalini through a theory called the "progressive sensory-motor cortex syndrome" or the "physio-kundalini cycles."

Bentov's theory evolved after he observed that the oscillation of microcurrents increased when subjects of his studies were meditating. These enhanced micromotions, as he called them, began with a standing wave formed in the aorta, the largest artery of the body. (A standing wave forms when a wave is confined by boundaries or when two waves going in different directions meet.)

In the lower part of the body, the aorta travels along the bottom of the abdominal floor into the pelvis and then subdivides before it continues down the legs. Dr. Bentov noticed that, at a certain point, a meditator's heart rate, respiratory rate, and diaphragm descent interrelate with the aortic motion. Now that the heart-aorta system is in resonance and entrained with the body,

points on the sensory and motor cortices also “light up.” These points correspond to the path the kundalini takes in the body.

In relation to the brain, the acoustical standing waves in the heart cause vibrations in the cerebral ventricles, which are fluid-filled cavities in the brain. In turn, the stirred vibrations vibrate the gray matter lining the fissure between the two brain hemispheres, polarizing the cortex and setting off a signal that moves along our sensory receptors, starting at the toes and moving upward. The entire body, including the skull, starts to move in the same rhythm. A person now experiences a kundalini reflex, perhaps even the full set of sensations reported with a kundalini process, such as tingling or electrical discharges. They might also report bliss, which occurs when the electrical signal stirs through the body, causing a full loop along the hemispheres of the brain and activating the pleasure centers.

The electrical current in both hemispheres has now created two pulsating magnetic fields of opposing polarities around the head, pulsing in harmony with the rest of the body. While most kundalini symptoms start on the left side of the body, Bentov acknowledges that the right brain is nonverbal and intuitive and can therefore override our linear self. However, once the kundalini completes its circuit, both sides of the brain are equally available and we can function on higher levels of consciousness. Essentially, the EMF of the meditator—the kundalini yogi—has formed an antenna above the head that integrates with the geomagnetic force field of the earth as well as the EMF and other energies in the solar system and universe at large. The enlightened person is now tuned in to the world around them, able to sense what is occurring there and what might occur elsewhere. This heightened consciousness, at one level, infers that a state of supraconsciousness is really a basic magnetic and bioelectrical attunement with the universe.

In his own research, Motoyama also noticed increased amplitude around the head during meditation. In fact, his studies also showed that, for a time, the micromotions on the left were 50 percent greater than those on the right. When the subject went into meditation, the right-left values became equal, indicating that a more transcendent state had been achieved.

Typically the kundalini stirs when it is cultivated over a long period of time, such as through meditation or purification practices. Bentov believed that spontaneous awakening can be quite difficult, causing people to function too suddenly in more than one reality at a time, both activating and causing trauma. Because of this, it is far better to cultivate the kundalini through chakra medicine techniques and keep these practices going throughout the process.[79]

Beyond the Science: The Snake as Transcendent

Ultimately, kundalini invites transcendence. It is a return to an earlier state, but without the loss of our hard-won wisdom. It is a return to pure light and sound, to that vacuum state when everything mingles as potential.

It's easy to believe that our physical form prevents us from accessing this amorphous unity, but the truth is that the code for bliss lies within and around us. As Dr. Scroggins pointed out in chapter 19, the frequencies present at the beginning of time (or before) are still present. We can still access them. We can also create new forms and ideas with them.

As I have explained throughout these last few chapters, we actually occupy several layers of reality simultaneously, which become higher in frequency the farther they are located from our body. Even the most ethereal of realities interpenetrates our physical body, however, saturating us with the Divine Consciousness implicit in the universe. Within this framework, the chakras are elevator shafts, negotiating and running between all levels of energy. They anchor the most sublime of realities in our body and also allow transformation of the physical so that while we live we can experience the transcendental states we remember and long to experience again.

Because we always inhabit every layer of reality, we cannot reduce kundalini to mere hormonal, neurological, or electromagnetic shifts. Rather, the physical transformation enabled in the body and mind occur because kundalini, through the chakras and other parts of the subtle anatomy, ties us to all layers of reality—including those manifesting as heaven. Once we

reach the pinnacle of truth, kundalini is then able to convert higher principles so they can actually occupy and morph our physical selves.

Because of the nature of the quantum universe and the existence of virtual reality (also called zero-point energy, torsion fields, and the vacuum state), kundalini can work more quickly than can our thoughts, minds, or deeds to accomplish this goal. In fact, all it's really doing is helping us remember our original state, as we—or at least the dream of us—existed at the beginning of time. Quantum entanglement infers that we remain connected to anything and everything that we've ever known, including the transcended aspects of self. Our high selves have never disappeared; they merely need to be ignited to come into being again. In other words, kundalini kindles our true selves.

Within this picture, chakras serve as vertical funnels between levels and layers of self and reality, and kundalini operates as the energy that allows crossover and transformation of energies. One of the optimum outcomes is that we learn (again) how to direct energy to meet conscious goals and, in fact, to help energy become conscious. One model that relates to this zero point of interaction is called verticalization, a term coined by David Wagner and also explained by Gabriel Cousens in their book *Tachyon Energy*.[80] The basis of their theory is that virtual particles are condensed in the subtle energy structures in the state of zero-point energy. This energy now becomes quantum and is converted by our subtle energy structures into frequencies that can create form.[81]

As the kundalini activates our physical but also subtle energetic structures, our personal energy becomes more organized and is drawn up through the layers of reality. Dense matter can now be (re)converted into higher frequencies. Eventually the chakras and subtle bodies themselves become absorbed into the purified and powerful energy of a kundalini vortex. Over time, chakras lose their importance because we are converted into pure prana flowing through a kundalini vortex, which now becomes the central energy source of the physical system.[82] Eventually the vibration of the elements or tattva are sped up to such as extent that, after becoming quite subtle, they are

reabsorbed into the cosmic matrix.[83] At this point we experience spirit over matter.

We are not limited by time or space—only by our own consciousness.

Could it be possible that there really is a consciousness, a Creator, a Brahman, that has held the truth of love and connection even while the universe has continued to expand and divide? Might it be true that because of kundalini, the reality of unity can be transferred into us at any time, whole and true? If so, the existence of the opposite—of separation—is present to provide us with a choice. When we choose the path of kundalini, we choose wholeness rather than separation. We choose love. Now all things really are possible.

We cannot depart the world of science as it relates to chakras without linking science and kundalini. Kundalini, a force known around the world, is the energy that vitalizes the chakras, bringing them energetically, spiritually, and biologically up to speed.

As we've seen in this chapter, kundalini is a bodily agent on many levels: neurological, hormonal, and electromagnetic. It affects us psychologically and ultimately steps us toward a higher level of wisdom. It can rise through the nadi system in dozens of different ways, affecting us positively and negatively, although the stages it invokes can be divided into common arenas. As we have just explored, these are the purification, activation, rising, and integration stages. No matter where you are in your kundalini journey, there is more to learn—and more stars to reach for.

For thousands of years, science and spirituality were considered the same study: the face of God looking in two directions, the mind merging both. Our exploration of the science of chakras and chakra matters assures us that this contemplative approach is still alive and well, enabling us to embrace the invisible and recognize that it is as real as what we commonly accept as concrete. Now that our understandings are anchored in part 5's scientific exploration of what is truly a spiritual path, it's time to reveal the creative edge of chakra medicine: the various chakra systems that have evolved over

time around the world. As you move into parts 6 through 9, which feature chakra philosophies, reflections, and systems through the lenses of different cultures, you'll be amazed at how many ways there are to explain and explore the same reality.

[contents]

PART 6

Chakra Systems of Asia

THE CHAKRA SYSTEM, in fact, is a part of the ancient and lost mysteries.

ROSALYN L. BRUYERE

Asia is usually seen as the incubator of all things chakra, although in this part and the next, you'll learn that chakras are clearly a worldwide phenomenon. But even within Asia we usually consider India the mother of the chakras.

The fact is that India is—and isn't—the origin of chakra knowledge. As we have already explored, most of the best-known concepts emerged there, branching from Vedic and tantric origins to pick up the tenets of yoga and then continuing to subdivide and spread. So we will start in India in chapter 23, but then we will widen our view to include Tibet and other regions of Asia in the next two chapters.

Across Asia, the magic of chakra knowledge was fairly easily anchored in those areas that were devoted to ancient mysteries or various forms of alchemy. This point underlines one of this book's major developmental themes: are chakras and other subtle systems meant to release us from this world, as most traditional Hindu philosophy reflects, or to be incorporated within our lives so as to enable alchemical transformation while we are in the body (a more tantric belief)?

I'll leave it to you to keep wondering how you'll answer this question for yourself as we visit Asia, beginning by examining a variety of chakra systems from India. This will include a brief discussion about systems that feature

different numbers of chakras from the classical Hindu seven. We'll get an overview of kriya yoga and its chakra-like bodies, the kshetras; ayurveda and marma points; and Shaivism, beginning with its history and ending with the wise writings of Guru Gorakshanath.

Next, in chapter 24, we travel to Tibet, where I'll feature the Tibetan system of tantra and Tibetan medicine, the Kalachakra Tantra system, and Himalayan Bon. This exploration follows a hefty backgrounder on Buddhism, as much of the spread of chakraology was the result of the introduction and acceptance of Buddhism across Asia. It was in Tibet where Hinduism met Buddhism and initiated this expansion. Because of the strong role Buddhism played, I'll thoroughly explain the main versions of this religion and describe its integration, along with what that integration meant for ancient ideas about the chakras.

You will discover that as Buddhism infused a variety of countries, both as a stand-alone spiritual tradition and within other religions, chakra wisdom was often shared along with it, creating combinations that still exist today. In other cases, chakra medicine knowledge burrowed into the culture and was then enhanced by local or folk knowledge, as happened in Tibet. And with the spread into certain areas such as China and Japan, we find that "chakra" simply became another name for concepts that already existed.

We then move farther east in chapter 25, first into China, where we look at Taoism, Zen, and the more contemporary system of Nakai Kubota. Then we journey to Korea, Thailand, and Japan, where we explore even more systems, both traditional and modern. All along you will find that while chakras, subtle energies, nadis, and more are named differently across the continent, the underlying truths are the same. Chakra medicine is an ancient, mysterious, and modern rendering of universal concepts.

[contents]

Chakra Systems of India

> How will I teach my people about the
> Divine Spark? You must only find the
> right word. The Divine Spark is infinite;
> the path to find it is not. The beginning of
> the path is the word.
>
> Christopher Moore

Here I invite you to suspend the conviction that there are seven chakras, all located exactly where your yoga teacher suggests says they are, and walk through time with me for a few paragraphs. Afterward I'll devote some ink to Indian-based chakra systems that will further challenge your assumptions about the chakras—especially the number of them. If by the time you reach the end of this chapter you still think there is only one "real" Indian chakra system, you may want to reread this section.

As we've already discussed in this book, the seven-chakra system that is so familiar to us today wasn't initially the norm, even in the West, until the publication and general acceptance of Arthur Avalon's book *The Serpent Power*. Expert David Gordon White has argued that the earliest Hindu source of the chakra system is the *Bhagavata Purana*, which lists six locations (*sthana*): the navel (*nabhi*), heart (*hrt*), breast (*uras*), root of the palate (*svatalumula*), between the eyebrows (*bhruvorantara*), and cranium (*murdha*). This framework emerged from the *Kaulajñana-Nirnaya*, the esoteric teaching of the Yogini Kaula School from around the eleventh century BCE, but that text actually outlined eight chakras. By meditating upon and worshipping these eight chakras, we acquire magical powers, including oneness with the yoginis and the yogic ability to become small.

Another text that documents the six chakras known to later Kaulism and yoga traditions is the *Kubjikamata-Tantra*, written in the eleventh century CE. The eleventh chapter in this text outlines the standard six chakras, starting with muldahara at the anus, establishing anahata in the heart, and concluding with ajña between the eyebrows. Added to this list is the "extra" center of the crown. However, later chapters in the very same text assert just five chakras, each associated with one of the five elements.

Even before the *Kubjikamatra-tantra*, perhaps before the tenth century CE, the *Netra-Tantra* presented six chakras called *adhara*, without svadhisthana or sahasrara, along with twelve knots (granthi)—compared to three of these, as is usually noted—and six spaces (*vyoma*) found along the central nadis. Kundalini is not mentioned, although initiates are instructed to visualize shakti in the central aspect of udana breath and therefore manifest her through the inhalation (prana) and the exhalation (apana). She can then rise through these six chakras:

- Organ of generation (*janmadhara* or *anandendriya*)
- Navel (*nabhi*)
- Heart (*hrt*)
- Throat (*krttha*)
- Palate (*talu*)
- Center between the eyebrows (*bhrumadhya*)

After piercing the twelve knots and spaces, Shakti meets her mate, Shiva, at the crown and then descends from this high point to the heart, and the body becomes filled with the elixir of longevity, called *amrita* or *rasayana*.

As you have discovered by now, further research often leads to further complications and contradictions. The *Laksmi-Tantra* text, dated between the ninth and twelfth centuries CE, cites three centers of visualization and thirty-two additional centers dotted along the body's axis, while the *Saiddhantika Sardhatrisatikalottara* devotes a chapter to a circle of channels (*nadicakra)* that enable access to supernatural powers. Other texts illuminate the subtle body as an inverted banyan tree or a circle of goddesses, while some of the

earliest writings describe chakra systems with nine, eleven, or even three sets of sixteen chakras, and various numbers of voids (*granthi*).[1]

I believe that some chakra systems have evolved to incorporate as many of these early ideas as possible. A case in point is the thirteen-chakra system shown in illustration 57.

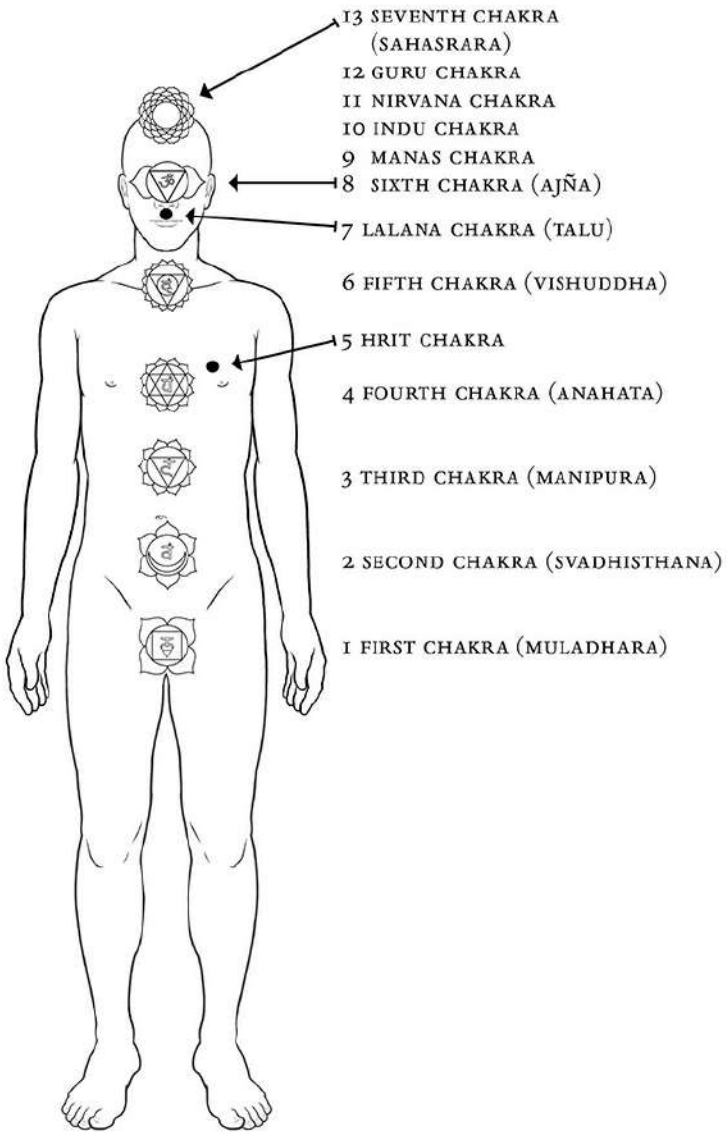

ILLUSTRATION 57—A THIRTEEN-CHAKRA SYSTEM: This East Indian system is one version of a tantric thirteen-chakra system. Chakras 9–12 are located between the ajña and sahasrara chakras but are not labeled in the illustration. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Now let us turn to several versions of Indian chakra systems, including a kriya yoga system and ayurvedic theory.

The Kriya Yoga System: Of Chakras and Kshetras

Kriya yoga is of ancient Indian origin, said to have been nearly lost over time. It was resurrected with the publication of *Autobiography of a Yogi* written by Paramahansa Yogananda.[2] The book's remarkable popularity spurred great interest in this branch of yoga.

Like most forms of yoga, kriya yoga involves mentally connecting with the body's energy and seeking union with universal consciousness. Somewhat uniquely, however, *kriya yoga* is focused on the internal energy associated with the spine, employing six primal or body-based spinal centers or chakras, in addition to other chakras. These basic chakras, through which energy flows up and down the spine, are located at these points:

Muladhara: Coccyx

Svadhisthana: Sacrum

Manipura: Below the navel

Anahata: Dorsal region; in the area across from the heart

Vishuddha: Where the neck joins the shoulders

Medulla Point: In the back of the neck at the occipital lobe, directly below the eyebrows. This point is usually called ajña, and this chakra is considered the seat of the soul or the door to the kingdom of Spirit.

In a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, kriya guru Swami Pranabananda Giri hints at two other spiritual centers, both located in the brain. The roudri is found on the left side of the brain above the left ear. The bama is located on the right side of the brain above the right ear. These are accessed when performing higher practices (*kriyas*).

Sahasrara, the seventh chakra, is also part of kriya yoga. Found at the top of the head, it is perceived as a light radiating from the upper part of the cranium. When performing kriya pranayama, an initiate briefly touches what

is called the *bindu*: a space located in the occipital region on the hairline. After accepting the tranquility the bindu affords, the initiate engages with the anterior fontanelle, called the *bregma*. Then, after reaching *sahasrara*, the initiate enters the realm of the eighth chakra, a center located about a foot above the fontanelle.[3] Know that in kriya yoga it's more important to perceive a chakra's approximate location than it is to visualize the chakra itself. By doing this it's possible to attune to the astral energy, hues of light that pour forth into and from the body. Indeed, a chakra has two aspects. The internal aspect is its essence, a vibration of light inviting awareness toward Spirit. The external aspect of a chakra radiates a diffuse light that enlivens the body.[4]

Kriya yoga proponents also recommend concentrating on the chakra trigger points (*kshetrams*) rather than on the chakra itself. These contact centers are located at the front of the body on the same horizontal planes as the chakras. By focusing on them, we send sensations through the nerves to the chakras themselves.[5]

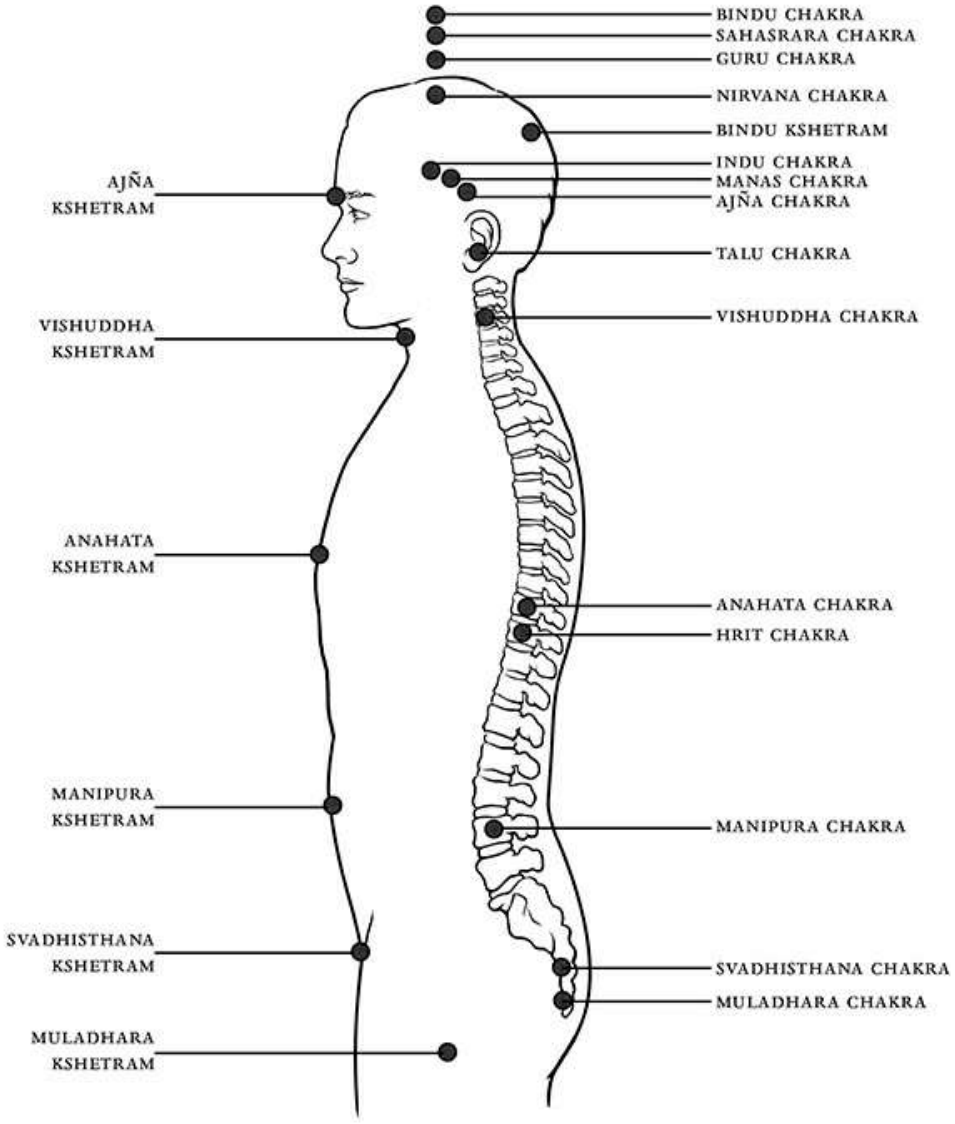

ILLUSTRATION 58—THE KSHETRAM POINTS: The kshetram points are trigger points used in kriya yoga. Each relates to one of the chakras. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Illustration 58 shows the location of these kshetram points in relation to the chakric subtle body and depicts the seven traditional chakras as well as several additional chakras that have been discussed in various places in this book. This figure is based on Susan Shumsky's book *Exploring Chakras*.[6] Illustration 59, also based on Shumsky's book, shows the kshetram points

and chakras in the brain. You can see these additional chakras as well as the brain points in both illlustrations.

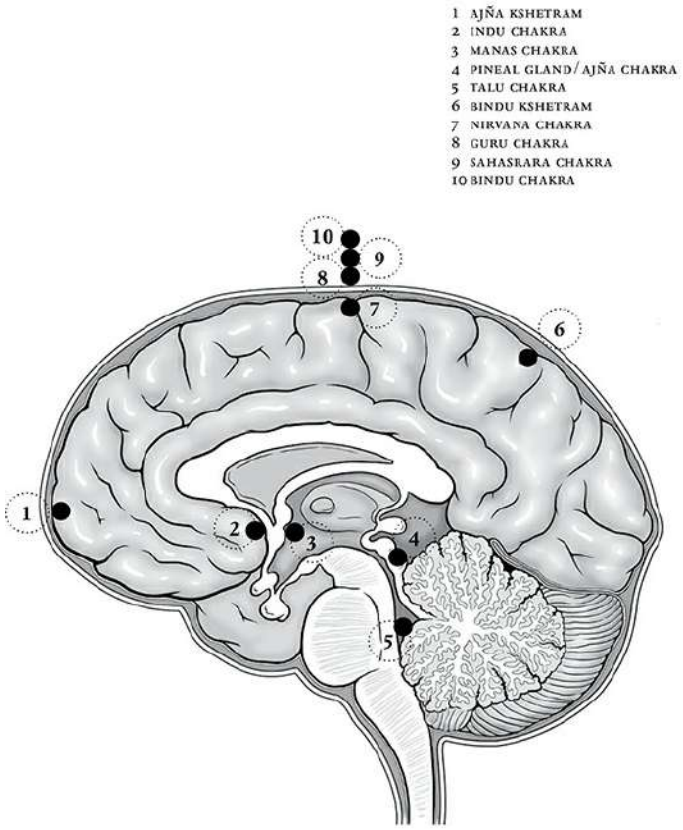

ILLUSTRATION 59—THE KSHETRAM AND CHAKRA POINTS IN THE BRAIN:
The chakras and kshetram points can be found throughout the brain, as per the areas shown.
ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Breathing the Kriya Breath**

What is a kriya breath? It is a deep inhalation through the nose that creates an unvoiced sound in the throat. This way of breathing raises the prana from the first chakra to the medulla oblongata. Some of this energy also rises to the bindu in the occipital region. The exhalation follows the prana back down the spine.

Simply draw a deep inhalation through your nose, sending a sound into your throat. You won't actually make the sound; rather, it will be a very low "whish." If you desire, imagine it as an "om" in your mind. Your mind will suspend activity for the two to three seconds you hold

the inhalation. Exhale without hurry. During the last part of the exhalation, you will perceive your navel area moving toward your spine, accompanied by the sense of energy heating this area. Many practitioners perceive this heat as less like that of the sun or a flame and more like a white spiritual radiation. Pause for another two to three seconds. Allow yourself to bask in the resulting peace.[7]

Ayurvedic Marmani and the Chakras: The "Spock" Points

Spock, you might recall, is the first officer in the *Star Trek* series. From the planet Vulcan, he can fell an opponent with a mere pinch of his hand by using the "Vulcan death grip." In this fictional universe one only has to squeeze a pressure point at the base of the neck to win a disagreement.

Imagine an energetic system within marma yoga, a specialized branch of ayurveda, or East Indian medicine. Unique to this energetic structure are between 107 and 117 "lethal points" or "marmani points," with the number depending on the system. These points serve as control mechanisms for the flow of prana. Chakras are among these points, each of which regulates organs, systems, senses, nadis, and chakras.

Marma yoga incorporates various practices that fall under the fifth branch of yoga in an offshoot called pratyahara. Pratyahara practitioners use several external yoga practices, such as asanas and pranayamas, as well as internal yoga activities, including meditation. Pratyahara could actually be described as the doorway between inner and outer yoga.

The vital points of this subtle energy structure are located close to the skin's surface and are integral to muscle fibers, veins, bones, and joints. Basically, a marma is the junction of two or more types of tissue. Prana is heavily present in these areas. Someone with knowledge of ayurveda can potentially treat all physical and mental conditions through manipulating the correct marmani points. The reason these are called "lethal points" is that if they are pierced too hard, the result is trauma or even death—hence the quip about "Spock points."[8]

Before taking a more precise look at marmani, I want to introduce you to the basics of ayurveda. This will help you better understand the power of the marmani and the chakras as part of their family.

Ayurveda: The Science of Life

Ayurveda, translated as the "science of life," is a five-thousand-year-old medical system that originated in India. It embraces Sankhya, one of the six classical Indian philosophies, as its foundation. Sankhya outlines a process of creation and the journey of consciousness into matter. Before creation there was a state of pure existence called Avyakta, "the unmanifest." Also called Brahma, from this purity emerged the male Purusha—unbounded pure consciousness—and Prakruti, the feminine creative potential. Permeating all is Mahad, the supreme cosmic intelligence. From Mahad is formed Ahamkara, the ego, which exists at every level and subdivides into the three gunas, the qualities of sattva, rajas, and tamas described elsewhere in this book.

The five elements (*pancha mahabhuta*)—ether, air, fire, water, and earth—all exist within the body, manifesting in areas inclusive of the cranial space, lungs, stomach, abdominal region, and pelvic bone, respectively. From a material perspective, ether is consciousness and provides space for communication between the cells, also maintaining cellular existence; air is electrical in nature and invites movement; fire is a radiant energy and governs body temperature; water is chemical energy and governs secretions and excretions; and earth is mechanical in nature and responsible for physical embodiment.

Influencing the function of the body's structure, and therefore the elements, are the three doshas. In a nutshell, doshas are body types based on unique permutations and combinations of the five elements. All three doshas include each element, but they are present in different amounts. A predominance of space and air creates the vata personality, which describes people who are movement oriented. Fire and water create pitta, depicting people devoted to

transformation. And water and earth constitute kapha individuals, who are substantial and earthy.

The various gunas are also present in different amounts in these three dosha types and further describe personality and physical qualities. For instance, the gunas of heaviness, slowness, and density formulate kapha personalities. Pitta people are hot, sharp, and penetrating, and vatas are dry, light, and mobile. Knowing these guna tendencies can help people decide which foods or behaviors will support or detract from their well-being. All in all, using this knowledge, ayurvedic medicine can precisely determine the nature of a person's imbalance. Noteworthy in our discussion is that a practitioner can also use the marmani to diagnose and alleviate imbalances.[9]

The Marma Points: Lucid and Lethal

A vital energy point located on the surface of the body, a marma (plural *marmani*) is infused with prana and is usually located at sites where veins, arteries, tendons, or bones intersect. The root word *mar* means "to kill," and certain marmani are so vital that injury to them can result in instant death. Another related term is *varman*, which is translated as "secret" or "hidden."[10]

The science of the marmani developed during Vedic times. They were mentioned in a story in the *Rig Veda* about a demon who thought himself invulnerable—until Indra killed him by piercing his marma.[11] Several schools of Indian martial arts use these points to inflict harm on their opponents as well as to enable recovery from wounds.

Then, around the sixth century BCE, a renowned ayurvedic surgeon named Sushruta applied knowledge of the marmani to surgery, developing the scientific use of these energy points as a healing art. His applications are recorded in the *Sushruta Samhita*, a core ayurvedic text, laying a foundation for interrelation of the marmani with doshas, elements, tissues, organs, and nadis. Marmani practices are included in everything from ayurvedic detoxification processes to marma massage, yogic practices, and energy diagnosis. The chakras are considered major points within the marmani system and are thus folded in as well.

My description of the marmani is mainly taken from respected expert Vasant D. Lad, who believes there are 117 marmani. He incorporates knowledge of the neuroelectrical system into his understanding of the marmani, noting ways in which touch, temperature, pressure, light, sound, and smell (used in aromatherapy) can all bring balance to a system through marmani work. He also links the marmani to the koshas, which were introduced in chapter 2.[12]

The Marmani and Chakra Medicine

A core understanding of the marmani comes through linking them to the elements, the koshas, and the chakras, but they are also associated with certain acupuncture points. Knowledge of the latter integrates ayurvedic medicine with TCM.

Basically, there are five types of marmani, with each set being related to an element and a region of the body:

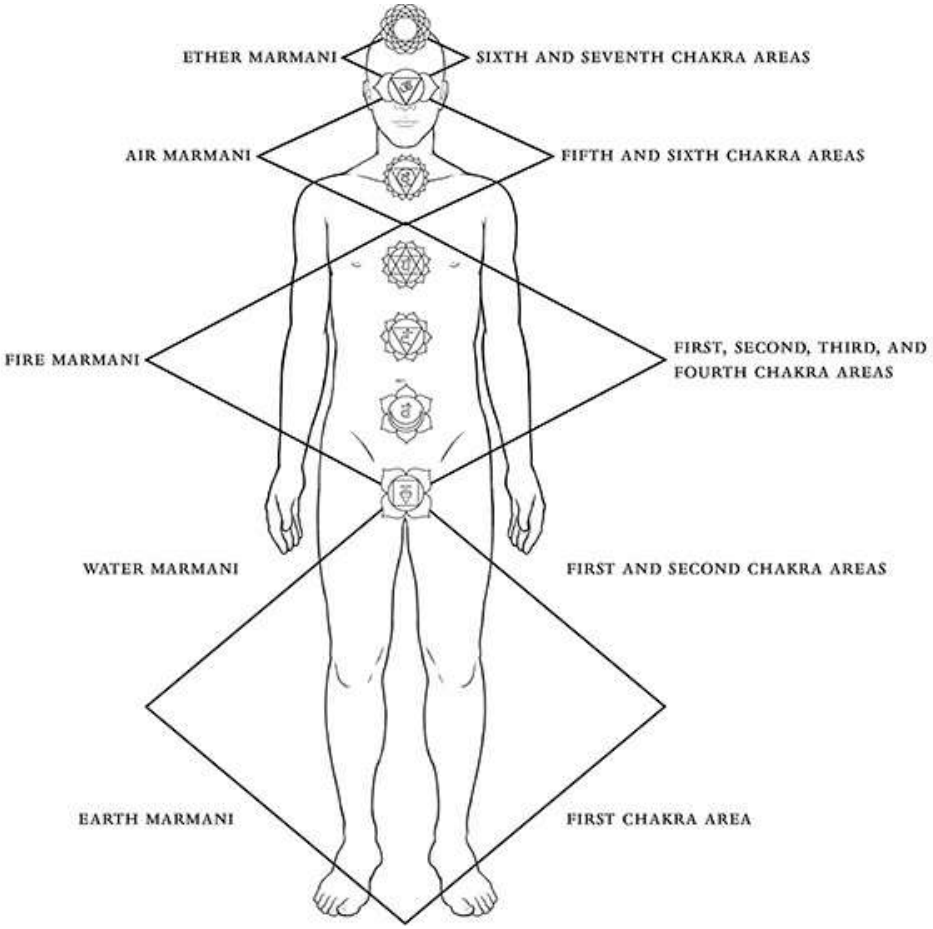

ILLUSTRATION 60—THE FIVE ELEMENTAL AREAS OF THE BODY: The five main elemental areas of the body fall in standard chakra areas. These are also the five regions by which the marmani are organized. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Earth Marmani: From the feet to the knees

Water Marmani: From knees to the anus

Fire Marmani: From the anus to the heart

Air Marmani: From the heart to the middle of the brows

Ether Marmani: From the mid-brow to the top of the head [13]

Illustration 60 shows my idea of how these areas incorporate several major chakra points. Illustration 61 shows how these regions are related to the koshas.

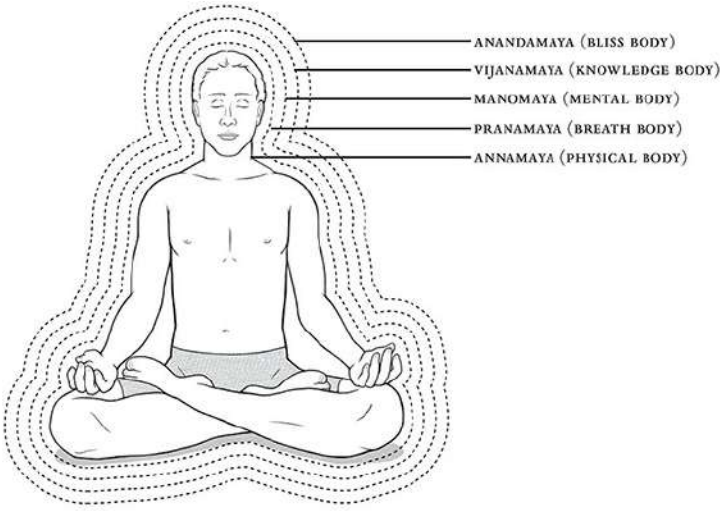

ILLUSTRATION 61—THE FIVE KOSHAS IN THE BODY: The five areas dominated by the koshas are similar to the five elemental areas of the body, five basic chakra areas, and the five marmanic regions. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

The chakras fold into the marmani in that each of the seven classical Indian chakras is also a marma. Because our exploration is mainly chakric, I have not presented all the chakra points. Rather, I describe only those marmani that relate to the seven main chakras, which are outlined in Lad's system.[14] Illustration 62 shows these marmani.

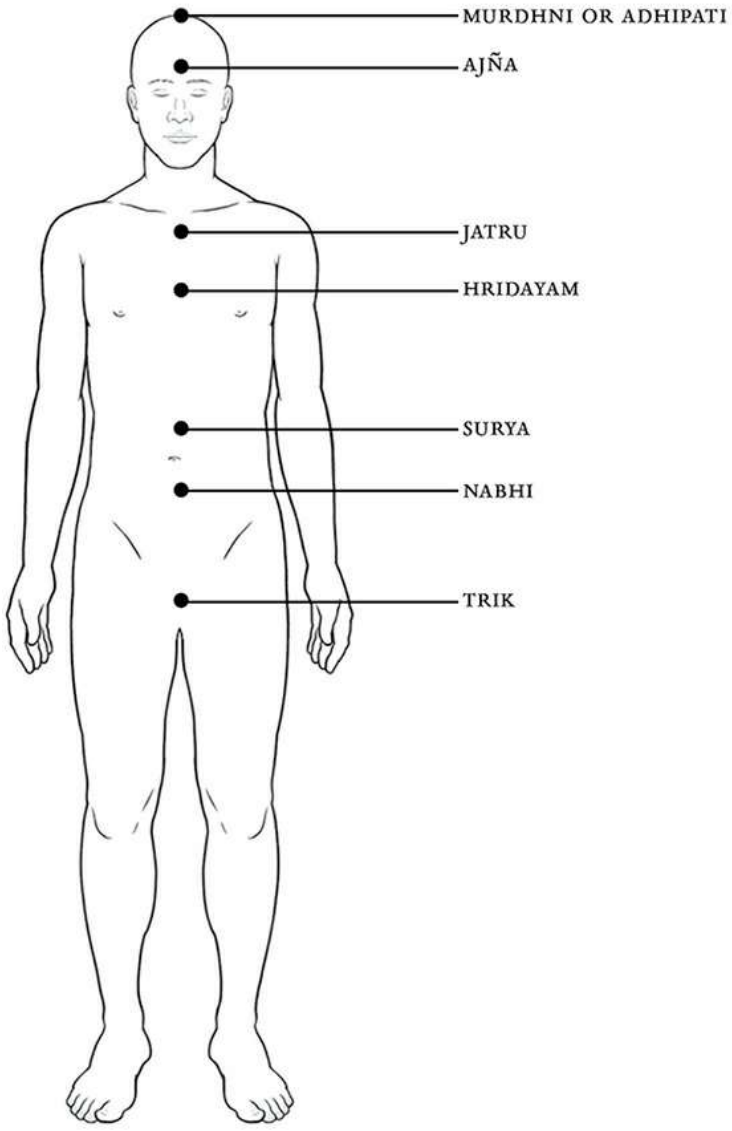

ILLUSTRATION 62—THE MARMANI RELATED TO THE CHAKRAS: These seven points relate to the seven classical chakras. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

My description covers each marma/chakra point in terms of its major activities and indications of imbalance, as well as the related kosha, vayu (a wind or vital force), and TCM acupoint.

MARMA 79—TRIK

Muldahara, First Chakra

Actions and Description: The trik point is located at the tip of the coccyx and is functionally related to the prostate and cervix. It can treat

pain, the urinary and reproductive systems, and the pelvic floor. It stimulates kundalini and is known as a mystical marma because of its association with the sleeping kundalini.

Indications: Low back pain, sacroiliac joint pain, sciatica, low libido, issues with urinary and reproductive systems.

Corresponding Acupoint: None completely correspond, although Bladder 35 and Governing Vessel 2 are helpful. [15]

Kosha: Annamaya

Vayu: Apana

Marma 61—Nabhi

Svadhisthana, Second Chakra

Actions and Description: Located at the navel or bellybutton, there are actually five nabhi points in all. From the center emanate four additional points, each governing four abdominal quadrants. Known as the place without fear, the nabhi is the root of the 72,000 nadis and relates to the Japanese hara and the lower dantian in Chinese medicine. It stimulates digestion and absorption and regulates many digestive issues.

Indications: Problems with the abdomen, digestion, and the immune system, such as those related to chronic fatigue syndrome.

Corresponding Acupoint: Conception vessel 8, known as the spirit gateway.

Kosha: Pranayama

Vayu: Apana [16]

Marma 60—Surya

Manipura, Third Chakra

Actions and Description: On the midline of the abdomen, this marma regulates the stomach and pancreas; it also harmonizes emotions.

Indications: Issues include ulcers, reflux, constipation, poor appetite, and emotional imbalance.

Corresponding Acupoint: Conception vessel 11

Kosha: Manomaya

Vayu: Samana [17]

Marma 52—Hridayam

Anahata, Fourth Chakra

Actions and Description: Found on the anterior midline, the hridayam regulates cardiac functions and the lungs. It also benefits the stomach and circulation and calms the mind, relieving stress.

Indications: Challenges with heart dysfunctions, the pericardium, asthma and coughs, reflux, and emotional disturbances.

Corresponding Acupoint: Conception vessel 18

Kosha: Jnanamaya

Vayu: Vyana [18]

Marma 42—Jatru

Vishuddhi, Fifth Chakra

Actions and Description: Found on the midline of the upper sternum, this fifth chakra point benefits immunity, respiration, the lymphatic system, spleen, and thyroid and parathyroid functions. It also enhances communication and releases suppressed emotions.

Indications: Indicated when low immunity, fatigue, or asthma or other respiratory complaints are present. Also addresses hypo- and hyperthyroidism, goiter, speech disorders, and emotional complaints.

Corresponding Acupoint: Conception vessel 21

Kosha: Vijanamaya

Vayu: Udana [19]

Marma 5—Ajña

Ajña, Sixth Chakra

Actions and Description: The ajña point is found on the midline of the forehead. It enhances cerebral circulation, functioning of the pituitary and pineal glands, and concentration and intuition. It calms the mind and helps the eyes and nose.

Indications: Dysfunction can appear as migraines, hormone imbalances, ADHD and poor memory, stress, insomnia, sinus conditions, eye problems, and emotional disturbances. Basically this point brings order to the entire system.

Corresponding Acupoint: None, although it is close to the Yintang or M-HN-3, which is on the Governing Vessel and calms the mind.

Kosha: Anandamaya

Vayu: Prana [20]

Marma 1—Murdhni Or Adhipati

Sahasrara, Seventh Chakra

Actions and Description: On the vertex at the midline of the head, this marma synchronizes the prana and apana vayus, enhances cerebral circulation, restores consciousness, regulates coordination and frontal lobe activity, calms the mind, and stimulates memory. It also works with the pituitary and pineal glands.

Indications: Challenges here are many and include strokes, muscle problems, hormonal imbalances, loss of consciousness, seizures, headaches, poor memory, ADHD, insomnia, sinus and nasal conditions, nausea, hernia, palpitations, and all emotional disturbances.

Corresponding Acupoint: Governing Vessel 20

Kosha: Beyond the koshas

Vayu: Prana [21]

Exercise: **Putting Marma Touch Therapy into Practice**

Do you feel drawn to work with a marma for yourself or another? I have created this exercise based on a common practice for you to work on yourself.

Settle your breath with meditation techniques and then select a marma point you would like to work on. Each finger corresponds to one of the five elements. For this exercise you will experiment with each finger.

Start with the thumb, which represents ether, and apply steady pressure to the marma for one minute or so. Use gentle pressure and increase it over time if you feel comfortable doing so. You can hold your finger steady at the site and rotate it clockwise or counterclockwise. Now do the same with your index finger, moving in order to the middle finger, ring finger, and little finger. Finally, cup your hand, hold it a few inches over the marma point, and take a few deep breaths, allowing your body to integrate the work you just completed.

The elements associated with each finger are as follows:

Thumb: Ether

Index Finger: Air

Middle Finger: Fire

Ring Finger: Water

Little Finger: Earth

Every individual responds uniquely to this work and must be treated accordingly. Consider learning which marmani relate to which doshas and customizing a treatment as needed.[22]

Shaivism: Hinduism Emerging from India

Shaivism is one of the four most widely followed sects of Hinduism, along with Vaishnavism, Shaktism, and Vedanta. Deeply rooted in tantric ideas and practices, it can be tracked back to the Vedas and is often thought of as the oldest of the major Hindu sects, although this distinct worship of Shiva probably didn't emerge until somewhere between the second century BCE and

the second century CE.[23] Shaivism has since spread throughout India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and parts of southeast Asia.

This section features the specific form of Shaivism that emerged in Kashmir in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent, as well as the renowned ideas of Guru Gorakshanath, who was linked to Shaivism.

Kashmir Shaivism: Trika Science

Kashmir Shaivism was a practice known as Trika until the nineteenth century, when it became a synthesis of several tantric schools and Hinduism. It is considered monotheistic and transcendental at the same time.

Trika, a threefold science that is nondualistic, is based upon tantras revealed by Lord Shiva that apply to all four schools of Kashmir Shaivism. Legend shares that in the ninth century CE Lord Shiva told the sage Vasugupta to head to a certain rock and read the teachings carved upon it. These words are now known as the *Shiva Sutras*, fourteen *sutras* (verses) of revealed wisdom. These sutras and their commentaries are the heart of Shaivist philosophy and have folded into them knowledge of subtle energy, chakras, kundalini, and the elements.

Core to this philosophy is the belief that everything in the universe is consciousness, although as long as we lack internal awareness we are asleep and must be awakened. The universe is expressed in different forms and organized by the three energies of Lord Shiva: para, parapara, and apara. Para refers to Shiva as the supreme and subjective energy; parapara is an intermediate energy and the medium for Shiva's mind; and apara is an inferior or objective energy. We reside in the inferior energy and must rely on the philosophy and practices of Kashmir Shaivism to carry us into the supreme energy. Mainly, we must walk the intermediate or cognitive energy to gain this path.

There are three subpaths within this path: using mantras and meditating on deities, concentrating on God-consciousness through transmission from a master, and using pranayama and mantras to develop higher consciousness.

After describing the basic Kashmir Shaivistic philosophies, concentrating on the energetic concepts, I will devote space to the Spanda school, which features a unique perception on the chakras.[24]

Kashmir Shaivism and the Energetic World

From an energetic perspective, Kashmir Shaivism features seven main planes of creation and several other Indian tantric ideas. The top plane of creation is paramishiva and the end point is fixed matter, where we dwell as humans. Everything is made from a spiritual light (*prakasa)*, which is contained within everything else. Everything is also made of elemental layers (*tattvas)*, which also represent principles of reality. They are known as the essence or "thisness" of a thing. There are thirty-six tattvas that describe everything from the Absolute down to the tiniest aspects of physical reality. (One writing, the *Samkhya*, adds eleven supplemental tattvas.) Humans have manifested from the "top down" and need to flow the opposite way to evolve, the culmination being dissolution into Shiva.[25]

The easiest way to envision the universe in Kashmir Shaivism is to picture seven levels of reality. On the top is Pure Consciousness, the source of creation. It emanates the second plane, one of Perfect Oneness, after which are created the two planes of the World and Awareness of the World.

Between planes four and five are the Cloaks of Illusion, which hold us in limited perception. Plane five is therefore what I would call Limited Perception. Under it is plane six of the Mind, and finally, the one we find ourselves relating to most often, the plane of the Senses and Form. Within these planes are thirty-six tattvas, described below.

The Thirty-Six Kashmir Shaivism Tattvas

The tattvas consist of the following:

- Five growth elements (*mahabuhutas)*, each of which relates to one of the five main tattvas that follow, from bottom to top. They represent the final points of manifestation, where light condenses into matter and is the basis for the material world, as well as of our sensations and perceptions.

Prithvi: Earth

Jala: Water

Tejas: Fire

Vayu: Air

Akasa: Ether

- Five *tanmatras* or bands of information that describe reality. They are the source of the energy composing the mahabuhutas and are considered the five subtle elements. Each governs a sense, serving as its "abode" rather than its reality.

  Gandhh: Smell

  Rasa: Taste

  Rupa: Form

  Sparsa: Touch

  Sabda: Sound

- Five *karmendriyas* or organs of actions. These organs are both physical and subtle.

  Upastha: Creativity (sexuality and urination)

  Payu: Excretion

  Pada: Foot (for moving about)

  Pani: Hand (for giving and taking)

  Vak: Speech

- Five *jnanendriyas* or cognition organs, which govern our five senses:

  Ghrana: Nose, organ of smelling

  Rasana: Tongue, organ of tasting

  Caksu: Eye, organ of seeing

  Tvak: Skin, organ of touching

  Srotra: Ear, organ of hearing

- Three internal organs that further subdivide, as follows:

Antahkaranas contain five tattvas/elements that create the following:

Manas: Mind

Buddhi: Intellect

Amamkara: Ego connected with objectivity

Prakriti: Nature

Purusa: Ego connected with subjectivity

Kancukas are six layers of energy forming an armor made of fiber that serves as a restrictive force for our consciousness, keeping us in this dualistic world:

Niyati: Limitation of place

Kala: Limitation of time

Raga: Limitation of attachment

Vidya: Limitation of knowledge

Kala: Limitation of action or creativity

Maya: Illusion of individuality

Suddha tattvas or principles that serve as the divine aspects of Shiva, of which there are five. These are described in relationship with the awareness of being:

*Suddha vidy*a: I-ness in I-ness; thisness in thisness

Isvara: Thisness in I-ness

Sadasiva: I-ness in thisness

Sakti: I-ness

Siva: I-ness or being [26]

The Chakras In Kashmir Shaivism

Chakra numbers differ according to Shaivism sect. In general, chakras aren't as important in this philosophy as the tattvas, although I will relate their most important roles. Having said this, I have concluded that most Kashmir Shaivism systems agree on the same basic five chakras and their duties.

First Chakra: Muladhara, located in the perineum

Second Chakra: Nabhi, twelve finger-spaces higher than the first chakra, in the navel

Third Chakra: Hrit, the heart-based chakra in the center between the breasts

Fourth Chakra: Kantha, found at the pit of the throat

Fifth Chakra: Bhurmadhya, located between the two eyebrows

These five chakras participate in the rising of kundalini, which activates through the breath. The breath responds to one of six promptings: the desire to recognize the Supreme, a dream for peace, the yearning to serve humankind, the craving for strength, the aspiration for the serpent power, and the drive to initiate others. Upon deciding to affirm any of these promptings, the kundalini is activated in muladhara.

Some systems include a solar plexus chakra as well as the crown chakra. For instance, Swami Lakshmanjoo, the source of much of the chakra information in this section, includes sahasrara in his discussion of kundalini, although he asserts that it is not stimulated by the kundalini, as are the lower five chakras. Rather, we must pierce it—an action accomplished once we're ready to release our attachment to worldly pleasures. After this happens we can achieve true bliss. If we fail to attain this step we reside at the bhrumadhya chakra, where we can still achieve the following eight great yogic powers:

Anima: Invisibility

Laghima: Weightlessness

Mahima: The power to create an enormous body

Garima: The power to add bodily weight in order to become immobile

Isitvam: The power to control the cosmos, such as rain or sun

Vasitvam: Attractiveness

Prakamyam: Control over bodily systems

Kamavasayitvam-Vyapti: The ability to create or reduce hunger

In Kashmir Shaivism kundalini energy sometimes seems to go in reverse, with the bhurmadhya chakra vibrating and the muladhara not moving. When this occurs it is because the breath of the kundalini has skipped over the lower chakras and moves only the fifth chakra, which then sends the kundalini back down, after which point the chakras start to vibrate. This state is called the "trance of ghosts," and in it we are unable to achieve anything. In fact, we might do what is wrong, not what is right.[27]

The Matrika Chakra And Sounds

In Kashmir Shaivism the chakras are associated with a "root vibration" as well as certain Sanskrit letters. The entire system of chakras is known as matrikashakti and can be considered a primal alphabet, formed from the essence of letters. The term *matrika* refers to the sum total of all the letters in the Sanskrit alphabet as well as the "hidden goddess": she who is hidden in sound.

In the *Shiva Sutras* enlightenment dawns upon those who understand the mechanics of the *matrikacakra*, a theory explaining that the Sanskrit alphabet is the core vibration that brings about the expansion of the entire universe. The matrika is the feminine creative energy that generates the physical world, from subtle to gross. She is hidden because we are unconscious of our ability to recognize her, although she generated the universe with a single primal vowel from which were produced all the sounds of the universe. The consonants are each associated with a tattva, while Shiva's unbounded awareness is linked to the sixteen vowels or semi-vowels. Put these Sanskrit sounds together and you get the "matrika chakra," the depiction of which presents a total of fifty-one *matrikas* or letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

Shaivite scholars even assigned particular utterances that once gave rise to phenomena. For example, the gutturals gave rise to the gross elements and the palatals to the five subtle elements. The cerebrals created the five organs of action and the labials were seeds for the five sheaths or bands of information. While these utterances together create the matrika chakra, there

is a corollary alphabetical symbolism called *malini*. The malini represents the aspects of unmanifested consciousness, in contrast to the matrika, which references the manifested or active consciousness.[28]

The Shakti Chakra And Life's Little (And Big) Tests

> The world is a tremor or *spanda* of the divine, an out-breath followed by the in-breath of enlightenment.

Such is the wisdom relayed in the *Spanda Karikas*, the second most important text in Kashmir Shaivism after the *Shiva Sutras*. It is actually a commentary on said sutras. Written by Vasugupta (or his disciple Kallata under supervision), the text shows us how to sit in meditation to realize ourselves by focusing on the shakti chakra to become *jivanmukta*, liberated, while alive.[29]

Spanda means "a throb," referencing the dynamism of the Divine. *Karika* means "a collection of verses." These verses, usually dated to the tenth century CE, feature the Supreme as a "throb" or vibration that transcends yet creates all time and space. This movement is extremely powerful and allows the awakened yogi to experience this "spanda principle" or creative vibration while waking, dreaming, and dream-sleeping.[30]

The basic tool of this illumination is the Shakti chakra, formally developed by the Krama school of Kashmir Shaivism. Simplistically, this chakra is a wheel or circle of energies at Shiva's disposal, as well as our own, and is an assemblage of Shaktis that help us create, sustain, or destroy energy.

Each Shakti has her own characteristic and encourages positive or negative manifestation. The chief Shaktis are organized into groupings of ten or twelve. These are the ones that surround an individual:

Vameshvari Shakti: Presiding Shakti that emits the universe from the Absolute

Khechari Shaktis: Resides in the subject or individual self

Gochari Shaktis: Related to the mind

Dikchari Shaktis: Related to the senses

Bluchari Shaktis: Related to the external world

This entourage of Shaktis can become malevolent if we don't stay centered within them. I picture them as a field of forces surrounding the eye of a hurricane. As long as we stay in the middle, we avoid being ripped apart and can linger in a peaceful state. By focusing on the fact that Shakti is the center of the universe, we remain in union with the Shakti entities and ourselves. We can slip out of the core by listening to the matrikas in the wrong way, following limiting ideas and lies instead of truth.[31]

EXERCISE: **Meditation on the Shakti Chakra**

Sit comfortably with your eyes open. Look around the room. Reflect upon the statement that follows, which I have adapted from one used in Shakti meditation.

I am Shiva, and I am at the center of all the Shaktis around me. Everything that occurs within my awareness becomes my reality.

Do you need to move around the room? You'll still remain in the center of this mini universe. You are always at the center.[32]

Guru Gorakshanath: A Nine-Chakra System

> How can yogis who do not know their own body with a house of one column (with nine doors)…attain perfection?[33]

Gorakshanath, also known as Gorakhnath, was a Hindu yogi linked to Shaivism and one of the two important disciples of Matsyandranath, a venerated guru. It was he who asked the question you just read. I feature Gorakshanath because, as you will find, so many of his ideas are identical to those presented in part 2, which contains current ideas about the seven Indian chakras. I believe that hundreds of years ago Gorakshanath had already collected much of what we now know about chakras.

Gorakshanath is believed to have been born in the eighth century, although some believe he walked the land hundreds of years later. Traveling across the Indian subcontinent, including Afghanistan, Punjab, Nepal, and even Sri

Lanka, Gorakshanath wrote the first books on Laya yoga and has also been called the "eternal sage" associated with Hatha yoga. In the *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati*, he says the body consists of nine chakras, a conclusion he drew from earlier literature.

Gorakshanath believed that a divine power sleeps within all of us and is stimulated by the *Kundalini Shakti*. As I've already stated, his writings convey the information about the chakras, as well as kundalini and the nadis, in ways that are entirely recognizable to contemporary chakra experts. For instance, consider this summary of how he describes the first chakra in his work *The Goraksha Sataka*:

> The Muldahara, known by several names, is the door of the anus and to the brahmarandra or sushumna. It is the seat of the apana wind and depicted as a lotus with four red petals inscribed with golden letters upon which we can meditate. In the center is a yellow square surrounded by eight shining spears, the emblem of the earth element. In the center of the square is a red triangle resting on the apex. This is the yoni called Kamarupa, a triangular center of fire that looks like burning gold. In the yoni stands a linga with a disc of light like a jewel, around which the kundalini coils eight times and sleeps with her mouth open at the sushumna, ready to drink nectar and produce words or sounds. On the triangle is a yellow *bija* or seed representing the mantra of earth and Indra. The tip of the bija rests on the elephant of Indra. In the *bindu* or dot of the letter is the four-headed, four-armed Brahma, shining like ten million suns, seated on a swan. Next to him is the Dakini Shakti, a fierce form of Kali. She carries in her four hands a spear, a staff with a human skull, a sword, and a cup of wine. She is sitting on a lotus and is wearing a black antelope's skin.[34]

This level of detail proves the point that Guru Gorakshanath is one of the most important figures in chakra medicine, providing the backbone of the chakra lore that most chakra afficionados hold as true today.

Following are descriptions of the nine chakras based on my review of several of Guru Gorakshanath's works as well as insights from Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, a contemporary expert on Gorakshanath. I have selected only the details that provide a general view of each chakra. Guru Gorakshanath places all chakras in the sushumna, which he calls the Brahma-marga. (All the chakras mentioned here appear in other parts of this book.)

Muladhara: First chakra. Also called adhdra and gudasthana, among other names, this four-leaved lotus is the door of the anus and sushumna and the seat of psycho-physical energy.

Svadhisthana: Second chakra. This six-leaved lotus is also called medhradhra and jalamandala because of its relationship with water (*jala*). It is located near the generating organ (sex glands).

Between the first and the second chakra, Guru Gorakshanath names yonisthana or kamarupa, which he describes as a four-fingered space between the anus and the sexual organ that serves as the "image of desire." It is at least partially identified with the triangle of the muladhara and represents the body's creative power.

Guru Gorakshanath also describes another organ located below the navel and above the male organ. Called kandayoni, nddicakra, or kanda, it is shaped like a bird's egg and is the origination point of the 72,000 nadis. It is said that kundalini lies coiled above the kanda.

Manipura: Third chakra. Also called the manipurka and the ndbhisthana, among other names, this is the ten-leaved lotus found in the navel and linked to the kanda.

Anahata: Fourth chakra. A twelve-leaved lotus, it also called hridaya and andhata, among other names, and is found near the heart. It invites freedom from the "fruits of merit and demerit."

Below the heart chakra is the *anandakanda* or the wishing-tree, a small eight-petalled red lotus through which we receive the bounty of fruit, flowers, and birds.

Vishuddha: Fifth chakra. Also labeled kanthadesa, cakdrashthana, and vyomacakra, this sixteen-leaved lotus helps link the lower and higher chakras.

Talu Chakra: Sixth chakra. This chakra lies at the root of the palate.

Ajña Chakra: Seventh chakra. A two-leaved lotus also called uddiyana and jinna-lotus, this chakra is found at the nerve center between the two eyebrows; it is also called *jnana-netra* or eye of enlightenment.

Nirvana Chakra: Eighth chakra. Found within part of the sahasrara, this chakra helps us realize individual consciousness. It is referred to as the circle where release is achieved.

Brahmarandhra: Ninth chakra. This chakra lies above the nirvana chakra and is also called hole-in-the-skull, akasha, and brahmasthana. It is the official place of bliss, the space where we attain *moksha* or freedom. Located at the highest point of sahasrara, it is explained by yet another assigned name—*purna giri pitah*—which marks it as the highest peak of Absolute Experience.

This chakra is often described identically to sahasrara itself. The lotus's head faces downward and looks like a full moon, and each of the thousand petals is inscribed with a letter of the alphabet and a bindu, which must be read right to left. The lotus is the color of the young sun, and within it is a full moon, wet with nectar. Within it is a triangle holding the great void, the subtle bindu that doubles as the abode of Brahma. Above is the goddess Samkini. Shiva also stands, free of illusion, with Nirvanasakti. Nirvanasakti is a form of Shakti that looks like ten million suns from which flow gladness and truth. It also represents a mystical state, a sort of subtle bliss.[35]

Note: Gorakshanath also teaches about the ten vital breaths that have been mentioned frequently throughout this book. His thoughts were introduced in chapter 1 in the "Basic Energies in the Hindu Universe" section.

Many Westerners believe that Indian history points to the seven-chakra system—and it does. Yet it's also the birthplace of other energetic storylines, many of which call chakras by different names and find these special points at various sites. In this chapter you met several such alternative Indian systems, including kriya yoga, marma yoga, and ayurveda, as well as energy-related ideas based in different forms of Shaivism, a sect of Hinduism. Having now been introduced to everything from the lethal marma points to a nine-chakra system, we step a bit farther northeast to explore the chakra medicine of Tibet.

[contents]

Tibet

INDIAN TANTRA MEETS BUDDHISM

> WE ARE NOT going in circles, we are going upwards.
>
> HERMANN HESSE

Tibet lies northeast of India, just beyond Nepal and the Himalayas and west of the People's Republic of China. Its dominant religion is Tibetan Buddhism, with Buddhism having arrived in the seventh century CE. Tibetan Buddhism is aligned with Indian tantra and several other influences, however, and chakras and chakra medicine philosophies are often part of the equation. The tantric connection is reflected in alternate names for this religion's many forms, such as Tibetan Tantra and Tibetan Tantra Buddhism. It also incorporates the indigenous practices of Himalayan Bon, which is a mystical and shamanic practice that still exists today and is practiced as a separate religion.

In order to help you understand the full impact of chakra medicine on this region—and vice versa—I will first present a brief overview of Buddhism, a worldwide religion and path that often features chakras or chakra philosophies. Including this as a backdrop will put into perspective how Indian tantric, Buddhist, and other Asian philosophies blended together in Tibetan Buddhism. Next I will showcase a particular form of Tibetan Buddhism as well as Tibetan medicine, one of the world's oldest and most complete forms of holistic medicine.

Because Tibetan Buddhism exists in more than one form, I have also included renderings of Kalachakra Tantra, a Tibetan Buddhist practice often called "Highest Yoga Tantra," and round out the discussion with a look at the religion known as Bon.

Buddhism: A Backgrounder

Buddhism can be approached as a religion or a way of life. No matter your motivation for learning it or which of these approaches appeals most to you, Buddhism outlines a threefold path that asks us to lead a moral life, be mindful of our thoughts and actions, and develop wisdom.

Siddhartha Gautama, born in Nepal in 563 BCE, founded the movement when at age twenty-nine he realized that the wealth he and his family enjoyed did not guarantee happiness. This awareness stimulated a search for the keys to joy. Eventually he discovered what was called the "middle path" leading to enlightenment. He spent the rest of his life teaching the core principles of the middle path. Currently the fourth largest religion in the world, it is spread mainly throughout China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. Its primary text is the Pali canon (Tripitaka) and numerous Mahayana sutras.[1]

There are many types of Buddhism, but each embraces the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. These are the Four Noble Truths:

1. Life is suffering.
2. Suffering is caused by craving and aversion.
3. Suffering can be overcome and happiness attained if we give up useless craving and live one day at a time, thus achieving nirvana.
4. There is an Eightfold Path that leads to the end of suffering. Its focus is on being moral and developing compassion for others.[2]

According to many experts, there are three main types of Buddhism:

Theravada Buddhism: This is the only surviving school from the earliest years of Buddhism. Its name means "Doctrine of the Elders." The focus of this branch is on using meditation to free the mind from suffering.

Mahayana Buddhism: Inclusive of the beliefs in Theravada, this form adds extra texts, guiding practitioners toward universal compassion. Initiates seek to become bodhisattvas, or to attain the awakened mind

of "buddhahood." This is a highly mystical path and is often called the Great Way.

Tibetan Buddhism: This form is often referred to as Tantric Buddhism or Vajrayana Buddhism and draws upon both Mahayana and Theraveda scriptures. It is also called the Diamond Way in recognition of the subtle body, often termed the diamond body, which we will explore in this section.[3]

How do these three main groups of Buddhism relate to chakra medicine concepts? Let's look at the subtleties of Buddhist practices.

Theravada Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism comes clothed in the saffron robes of the monks of Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma, and the teachings collected in the Pali canon, which encompasses twenty-eight volumes. It represents the *Tripitaka* (*tipitaka* in Pali) or "three baskets" of original works from the Buddha.

Typically chakras are not considered a component of Theravada. However, experts including Bhikkhu Gavesako, a Czech-born Theravada monk (*bhikkhu*), explain that there were once unorthodox and therefore tantric aspects of Theravada that included the use of amulets, images, yantra diagrams, chanting, and meditation methods. The meditations involved used visualization and mantras to direct mind energy into centers located in the areas of the chakra. These methods weren't widely known because they were practiced unofficially or secretly.

Another chakra medicine connection is the emphasis on the four elements. Earth represents hardness; water is moist and contains things; wind moves and causes maturity; and fire creates heat, resulting in perfection. Bodily health is dependent on achieving a balance between all four elements.[4]

EXERCISE: **An Experience of Theravada Buddhism**

If you would like to pull a thread of tantric Theravada and glimpse its mystery, you can do so with the following ancient mantra, which can

be chanted. Chanting is a vital part of this Buddhism practice, and there are many different types of—and reasons for—chanting.

The phrase you'll be chanting is part of a collection of chants for blessings. These chants can be used by an individual or in a group, enabling a rejoicing attitude if alone or with others. The phrase you'll use is one employed in context of a chant that thanks those for their gifts and donations. When chanting it you might feel grateful to Spirit for what you are given, focus on a person who has given to you, or celebrate the exchanges of give-and-take you have been a part of.

The homage you'll be sharing is to the Triple Gems or Triple Treasures, the three things that Buddhists take refuge in. These are Buddha (the historical Buddha and the idea within us), dharma (the path to enlightenment), and sangha (the community of those committed to enlightenment). When chanting this phrase, it should be started each time by stating the three letters of AUM, each of which relates to one of the Triple Gems. These are the three letters of AUM: Arahato, Uttamadhammassa, Mahasanghassa.

The phrase you will chant is this: *Homage to the Great Seer, the Worthy One, Rightly Self-Awakened…*

Before you chant, take a few deep breaths and clear your mind. Start by putting the words together (*Arahato, Uttamadhammassa, Mahasanghassa, Homage to the Great Seer, the Worthy One, Rightly Self-Awakened…*). Pronounce the words aloud, focusing on their meaning. Then pick up speed, repeating the phrase over and over, until you find a cadence that is comfortable for you. When complete, slow your chant, take a few deep breaths, and sit in silence until you pick up the threads of your own life again.[5]

Mahayana Buddhism

Developed about three hundred years after the Buddha's death, Mahayana Buddhism incorporates a rich plethora of texts that often challenge our superficial perception of the world. It differentiates itself from earlier

Buddhism by calling itself the Great Vehicle rather than the Lesser Vehicle. It is often referred to as Northern Buddhism because it extends throughout East Asia and north of the Theravadan cultures.

Mahayana teachings were generally presented in relatively new scriptures that supplemented the earlier scriptures incorporated in Tripitaka. These included the *Diamond Sutra*, the oldest printed book in the world; the *Prajñaparamita*; the *Heart Sutra*; the *Pure Land Sutras*; the *Madhyamika*; and the *Yogacara*. Mahayana works, including texts from the extensive Zen libraries, are present in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese versions of Tripitaka.

There are numerous Mahayana schools, many of which became more powerful when Indian Buddhism died out in the eleventh century BCE following the Muslim incursion. Among these the best known is Zen, the word being a Chinese form of the Sanskrit *dhyana* (meditation). The two main Zen schools are Rinzai and Soto. Rinzai emphasizes reflection on paradoxical riddles called koans. This puzzled concentration helps us break through our perceptions of the world. Soto was introduced to Japan by the leader Dogen and emphasizes the practice of sitting meditation.

In addition, certain Mahayana texts propose the need for an ideal environment for spiritual development; hence the introduction of Pure Land Buddhism, which argues that humans have degraded to a point where, at best, we can only hope to be reborn into a Pure Land. There are many Pure Land schools, including the Japanese school of Jodo Shu that has transformed the Buddha Amitabha into an archetype worthy of devotion. Yet another form of Buddhism, Nichiren Buddhism, was founded by the Japanese monk Nichiren, who also acknowledged the decline of humanity and encouraged devotion to the *White Lotus Sutra*, incorporating sutra chanting.

In general, Mahayana teachings add these three concepts to the traditional approach:

1. There is an Eternal Buddha. This Buddha can take on different forms, historically and celestially.

2. We are to become *arhats* instead of bodhisattvas, seeking our own enlightenment instead of emphasizing compassion for all beings.
3. We must extend the No-Self or *anatma* and develop the concept of emptiness.[6]

In terms of chakras, the Mahayana texts do not emphasize these energy bodies. Their influential concepts, however, are inclusive of the main chakra medicine ideals. As well, Mahayana is an umbrella for a variety of approaches and its practices are often tantric, also emphasizing the use of intuition. For instance, the Yogacara School in particular emphasizes the practice of yoga, especially meditation, for attaining *Bodhi,* or the highest truth.[7]

We also find hints of energetic bodies in the description of the three bodies of the Buddha, a Mahayana understanding explaning that Siddhartha Gautama can be seen in different lights, or as different bodies. The main three bodies are the dharma body (*dharmakaya)*, the bliss body (*sambhogakaya*), and the transformation body (*nirmanakaya*). The dharma or truth body is the eternal Buddha, identified with the concept of emptiness. The bliss body is related to celestial Buddhas who dwell in their own Buddha lands and guide the sentient beings born there. The transformation body signifies the manifestations of the Buddha in this world, including the historical Buddhas such as Gautama.[8]

Vajrayana Buddhism

Vajrayana Buddhism, also called Tibetan or Tantric Buddhism, developed in India around the fifth century CE. It is also known as the Diamond Vehicle (*Vajrayana* means “diamond”) and the Thunderbolt Vehicle. It is usually believed to have emerged from Mahayana in India in the sixth and seventh centuries CE. Spreading out of India, it became established in the Buddhist world, particularly in Tibet where it became the dominant form of Buddhism. From its origins in India it retained many tantric traditions, which is why the names Tibetan Buddhism and Tantric Buddhism might be used

interchangeably. Therefore it represents an esoteric extension of Buddhist thought and an effective path to enlightenment.

In terms of chakra medicine concepts and practices, Vajrayana could be considered a marriage of Buddhism and Hindu yoga or tantra traditions. As a Buddhistic tradition, Vajrayana draws mainly on two schools of Buddhism. From Mahayana it embraces the role of the gods and bodhisattvas, both of which help us escape *samsara,* the cycle of death and rebirth. Hinayana, known as "the little way," emphasizes personal freedom, allowing individual growth.

From the yogic traditions Vajrayana inherited chakra medicine practices including the use of mantras, mandalas, and even chakras, as you shall see in following sections. The use of chakras differs according to Vajrayana schools, which include the Nyingma ("ancient") school and the Kagyu school, also called the "whispered" or Red Hat tradition. Within this tradition is the Karma Kagyu or Black Hats, which are led by reincarnated heads of the lineage. There are also the Sakya or Pale Earth tradition, with several subsects, and the Gelug or Yellow Hat school, headed by the Dalai Lamas through the centuries. Still another branch is the Shingon school in Japan, which emphasizes the archetypal Buddha Vairochana. The current Dalai Lama is a well-known lama or guru in the Tibetan Buddhism lineage, specifically the "Way of Virtue" of the Kadampa tradition, considered Mahayanic.[9]

Another leading religion in Tibet is the indigenous Bon, which took on many Vajrayana traits over time.[10] We will discuss Bon a little further on.

Tibetan Buddhism and the Channel Wheels

Tibetan Buddhism draws from Indian Buddhism and incorporates tantric or yogic ideas including the use of chakras for accessing the wisdom of the body. In fact, the chakras—usually referred to as doors or channel wheels—play a vital role in Tibetan practices. They are part of our physical embodiment, through which we can eventually achieve a sense of emptiness—a crucial goal among Buddhists.[11]

Tantric Buddhism or Vajrayana broke off from Indian tantra at an early stage. This means its version of the chakras differs from the typical Hindu version, which continued to evolve over time. In general, Tibetan Buddhism acknowledges four main chakras or channel wheels but can also feature five, seven, or ten channel wheels, usually with a different number of spokes assigned to the wheels as compared to Indian tantric counterparts. In some approaches the throat is the only one with the same number of spokes—sixteen—as the Indian system.

Recognizing that different sects of Vajrayana are unique, I will nonetheless strive to outline the most basic of Tibetan Buddhist systems. Upcoming sections on the Kalachakra system and Taoism are similar to this presentation but differ in enough ways that I will thoroughly present them separately. Know that no matter the slight variations in Vajrayana systems, the core ideas are the same, as is the final goal: enlightenment.

An Overview of the Tibetan Buddhist Subtle System

The Tibetan tantric view of the subtle energy body is especially interesting because Tibet has been almost completely isolated from the surrounding world for many centuries, primarily because of geography. This was one of the reasons, however, that the native understandings from India were able to survive and the Indian chakra system remains intact within Tibetan esoteric philosophies. The key foundation for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism is our good friend vital energy, as well as a structured subtle body called the vajra body. This body is described in this section as well as in the section The Vajra Diamond Body."

Simplistically, the Tibetan Buddhist *vajra* (subtle body) relies on red and white subtle drops instead of kundalini, as well as energy channels, channel wheels, and winds that invite transformation. The channels are equated with the nadis; the wheels, also called doors, with the chakras. The drops are always present in the navel and head chakras and are frequently found in other wheels as well, depending on the system. Various subtle winds pass through a central channel, comparable to the sushumna, to enable

transcendent awareness, and like the sushumna it is one of three main channels. This happens once we awaken *tummo*, an inner fire, in order to create conditions for enlightenment and develop extrasensory abilities such as levitation. The winds come about not only through the practice of yogic techniques but at the time of death. This phenomenon is known as the "clear light."[12]

The subtle winds are power fields that awaken movement and resist chaos. They are analogous to prana. The movement of these winds within the bodily channels and chakras produces transformation and spiritual development.

The white and red drops are thick subtle substances said to create the ingredients of everything material, including our bodily structures. The red drops are linked to the blood and the energy of fire and most commonly associated with the navel or manipura center. The white drops are linked with inherited substances and the sperm, as well as higher subtle energies. They are frequently associated with the top head center, which you'll discover is comparable to sahasrara, although it is not so named.

The word *door* metaphorically describes the channel wheels' relationship to the winds. The winds (vital energy) can only penetrate the central channel through the channel wheels, entering much like wind gusts through the windows in a house. The goal of Tibetan esoteric practices, as well as Buddhist tantra in general, is to open these doors and enable this entrance.

In the typical ("unenlightened") person, these winds wander within the subtle channels, activating the bodily organs associated with lower concepts and behaviors such as greed or envy. We can only activate our superhuman powers and true self by shifting the winds into the central channel.

The channel doors are uniquely described as operating both vertically and horizontally. In the classical Indian system the chakras are examined from the front surface of the body; in esoteric Tibetan traditions the chakras are explored from above, so we perceive their horizontal cross-section. This could account for the differences in petal count between Tibetan and other tantric systems. By examining the channels from this point of view, we can see the flow and even the number of petals differently. Of the potential ten

doors, there are four main channels. These doors are further explored in upcoming material.

The three main channels form knots in these centers, as the left and right channels bend around the central channel, first in front of the body. The heart center has three knots (because of this, it is considered especially important) while the other three centers each host a single knot. (In some systems the heart center is said to have a sixfold knot formed by the three overlapping loops the channels make.)

"Untying knots" is an important concept in Tibetan Buddhism. In a way similar to unlocking the granthi, an Indian concept explored in several places in this book, we must untie the knots to awaken the red and white drops, which allow the wind to move into the central channel. The most important channel wheels are those that have knots: the navel center (manipura), the heart center (anahata), the throat center (vishuddha), and the top of the head center (sahasrara or ajña, depending on the interpretation). The petals in these centers are red or white. The two main wheels, the head and navel centers, have triangles in their centers, and the rest hold circles. In these four main centers the number of petals doubles from the heart chakra upward; the heart chakra has eight petals, the throat features sixteen chakras, and so on.

There is a special drop in the middle of the heart wheel—an indestructible drop. The current Dalai Lama says this heart wheel is one of phenomena and that this special drop originates at the center of all other channel wheels. This indestructible drop carries within it a subtle life-bearing wind. Upon death all winds dissolve within it to bring forth a sort of second dawn or renewal. I think of it as a raindrop of the soul, and it is carried on the winds from life to life. Enclosed in a small sphere within the heart, this drop describes the precious contribution of the heart to our lives on every level.

Each of the eight petals (sometimes called needles) of the heart is associated with a geographic direction and primary elements. Three channels flow from each petal. The first is blue and linked to the subtle winds. The second is the channel of speech; it is red and contains red drops. The third is related to the body; it is white and contains white drops. Each of these ends up in twenty-

four parts of the body, forming a mandala, as well as twenty-four holy places on our planet. Each of the twenty-four channels also subdivides into three parts, creating seventy-two channels that further subdivide until 72,000 channels are formed.[13] The beauty of this system is matched by its intricacy, which is why I will devote more space to the subject of Tibetan channels and channel wheels here.

The Tibetan Channels and Channel Wheels

In Tibetan tantra the channels are a network of riverways; the channel wheels are located in the middle of the central channel. These channels, which are manifested and unmanifested conduits, include the arteries, veins, ducts, and nerves, as well as subtle channels. The central channel begins between the eyebrows, ascends in an arch to the crown of the head, and then descends in a straight line to the tip of the sex organ. All channels operate as bodily psychic passages for the flow of visible and invisible substances, transmitting blood, wind, and consciousness as roots for our being.

Of the three main channels, the central one is similar to the pole of an umbrella, running through the center of each channel wheel; the other two run alongside it. The central channel is pale blue on the outside and has four attributes: it is straight, it contains an oily red color inside it, it is transparent, and it is flexible. It lies midway between the right and left halves of the body but closer to the back than the front. More precisely, there is a thick life channel immediately in front of the spine—the central channel runs in front of it.

The central channel is also known as the “two abandonments” because gathering the winds into this channel allows us to release the negativity associated with the left and right channels. Another name for this is the mind channel (*rahu)*; in Tibetan it is called the *uma*.

The right channel is red in color and begins at the tip of the right nostril. The left channel is white and starts at the tip of the left nostril. They both ascend in an arch to the crown of the head on either side of the central channel. From the crown they travel down to the navel in a straight line. The

left channel curves a little to the right below the navel, separating from the central channel, and rejoins in the sex organ. It holds and releases sperm, blood, and urine. The right channel curves below the navel a little to the left and ends at the sex organ. These channels branch until they eventually form 72,000 channels, which together formulate our consciousness, with the right and left channels wrapping around the central channel three times. Each channel also loops over itself, which results in a sixfold constriction at the heart. This looping creates two other constrictions. These constrictions, called *knots*, essentially prevent wind (described next) from moving through the central channel. At death these knots are loosened and all the winds are returned to the heart, which is restricted in everyone but the most adept of yogi practitioners.

Inside the channels are six types of consciousness, called *sems* or *shespa*, the "mind" and the "knower." The subtlest aspect of the mind resides below the navel, the subtle mind is in the heart, and the gross mind is in the head or brain. While the mind is clear and luminous, with no color or form, when relating to sensory objects it produces six different consciousnesses (eye, nose, ear, tongue, body, and mental). These ways of knowing enable us to perceive and analyze external objects and relate to the world of form, sound, smell, taste, and the concrete nature of things. The mind is the center of the vajra body.

Subtle winds produce ten gross physical winds, composed of five principal winds and five minor winds. These sustain the body-mind system such as the brain and the heart. The wind flows inside but also outside the physical body, and its shape is similar. It is both subtle and psychic but also performs physical functions in our tissues. There would be no solid tissue in our body without this most subtle of winds. If it flows correctly, we are healthy; if the wind is impeded and tainted, so is our health. Even more interesting are tantras suggesting that among the 72,000 channels flow 72,000 winds, which impose 72,000 emotions.

Except at death, the winds will only enter the ten doors through one's meditating on emptiness with the mind of bliss. This concentration allows the

rising of the tummo and the clearing of the system. These ten doors and their locations include:

- Upper tip of the central channel, between eyebrows
- Lower tip, at the sex organ
- Center of the crown channel wheel, at the apex of the cranium
- Center of the throat channel wheel, located near the back of the throat
- Center of the heart channel wheel, located between the two breasts
- Center of the navel channel wheel
- Center of the secret place channel wheel, four finger-widths below the navel
- Center of the jewel channel wheel, located in the center of the sex organ, near its tip
- The wheel of wind at the center of the forehead channel wheel, having six spokes
- The wheel of fire in the center of the channel wheel, midway between the throat and the heart channel wheels, having three spokes [14]

Of these, the most vital chakras are the four main wheels, each of which can be described through its spokes, the shape within it, its color (which also depicts the color of the drops), its main activity, and the deities associated with it. In most Tibetan systems, as well as in Buddhism overall, energy centers are linked with deities that can be accessed for positive purposes; this process is more thoroughly described in the next section, "Meeting the Medicine Buddha."

These are the four vital chakras:

Mahasukha or Svabhavika Wheel: Great Bliss Chakra

Location: Head

Spokes: 32

Shape: Triangular

Color: White

Activity: Physical, waking

Deities: Wrathful

Sambhoga Wheel: Enjoyment Chakra

Location: Throat

Spokes: 16

Shape: Circular

Color: Red

Activity: Talking, dreaming

Deities: Wise

Dharma Wheel: Dharma Chakra

Location: Heart

Spokes: 8

Shape: Circular

Color: White

Activity: Mental, sleeping

Deities: Peaceful

Nirmana Wheel: Transformation or Manifesting Chakra

Location: Navel

Spokes: 64

Shape: Triangular

Color: Red

Activity: Procreation and creative power; easiest door to bring in energy winds

Deities: Though some systems affiliate a yogini with this chakra, systems such as that in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* only assign a mystic group of deities to the other three main chakras.[15]

Meeting the Medicine Buddha: The Tibetan Buddhist Medical System

I'd like to introduce you to the Medicine Buddha.

This teacher of medicine's radiant body is azure blue. In his left hand he holds a begging bowl full of the nectar of long life. His right hand offers you a myrobalan plant, a great medicine. His smile curves with the mystery of the ancient tantric art of Tibetan medicine, one of the most complete and holistic medicine systems in the world. In its incorporation of chakras, this medicine —and the Medicine Buddha who represents it—belongs in our chakra medicine sourcebook.

The medical lore of Tibet is primarily based on seventeen Sanskrit Indian ayurvedic texts that were translated in Tibet to fill six tomes of learning and four thousand pages. The texts were imported with the movement of Buddhism into Tibet starting around the seventh century BCE, and though many of the original documents were lost in their native home of India, we are fortunate that they were preserved in Tibet.

Tibetan medicine is more than a duplication of ayurvedic medicine, however. Some of the foundational information has been uncovered at ancient Indian sites dating from the third millennium BCE, incorporating rich practices such as those noted from 5000 to 2000 BCE in the *Artha Veda* and other texts. This imported data mingled with pre-Buddhist shamanic traditions and, eventually, Chinese, Greek, and Persian medicine. The current Tibetan medical system presents a cornucopia of wisdom about how we can harmonize our human bodies with the Divine and the cosmos.

The addition of Buddhism to this rich heritage formulates a truly holistic system. Magic and psychology, surgery and visualization, mantras and mudras: nearly everything tantric and allopathic makes an appearance. Buddhism added the core concept that illness is a consequence of the

delusion of duality and the ego's selfishness. Karma can cause problems to carry over from one life to another, so it is especially important that we address our subtle and spiritual aspects to achieve deep transformation. Most uniquely, aspects of our body and energy system correspond to counterparts of Buddha nature. We can therefore transform our own body by relating to the mandala or symbolic representations of the various Buddhas via chakra medicine work.

The importance of the subtle body in Tibetan medicine cannot be overrated. As is explained by Terry Clifford, whose book *Tibetan Buddhist Medicine Psychiatry* I am using as a basis for this section, the subtle body is the main means—and proof—of tantric transformation.[16] According to Tibetan religious literature, the past is littered with men and woman who appeared ordinary but were emanations of the Buddhahood. When they were cut open, their bodies shone as whole realms of glorious luminous deities and mandalas, networks and webs of glistening energy patterns.[17]

In Clifford's analysis the body hosts six main chakras. The first chakra relates to the body and lies between the eyebrows. It is associated with white light and the transmutation of ignorance. The second chakra, in the throat, is red, related to speech, and transmutes desire. The third chakra of the mind, located at the heart, is blue and transmutes anger.

The fourth chakra is the navel chakra of quality. It is yellow and represents the transmutation of ego. The fifth chakra is the genital center of activity. It is displayed as a green light and represents the transmutation of jealousy. In some practices the top of the skull in its entirety is the head or crown chakra. When both head chakras are mentioned, the chakras total six.

While the Tibetan medical system works with all six chakras, three to four of these are the most important for healing purposes. For instance, visualizations often concentrate on those related to the Buddha body, speech, and mind (between the eyebrows, throat, and heart, respectively). Each of these centers incorporates its own representation of Buddha. In this process a lama often works with the deities related to these energy centers. There are forty-two peaceful deities in the mandala at the heart center and fifty-eight

wrathful ones in the head center. Ten lineage deities, gurus from the initiate's tradition, dwell in the throat. All can be called upon to create balance, although the highest way to internalize the medicine mandala or the Medicine Buddha is our head chakra. Here we can access all four directions of the healing mandala, which are also found in the other four main chakras.

These four directions are actual places in Tibet, each of which relates to a particular chakra and healing endeavor:

Western Mt. Malaya: Maintains vital organs at the throat

Eastern Mt. Ponadan: Cures every disease in the heart

Northern Mt. Gangchen: Neutralizes cold at the genital chakra

Southern Mt. Begche: Neutralizes heat at the navel chakra

As has been implied, the Vajrayana technique of identification with a Buddha often involves receiving healing from a lama, although self-healing is also possible. The processes used draw upon spiritual energies, not only bodily activities. It's understood that causal issues are frequently karmic or related to soul issues, and that these must be addressed spiritually. Thus the main medical balm is a spiritual medicine called ambrosia (*dutsi*), an "accomplishment medicine." The lama or tantric adept also can generate a subtle vital essence called *thigle* to stir the Bodhi-mind, which is the mind that perceives what is real behind appearances. It is the part of the self that believes in morality and goodness and strives to be like Buddha. These energies can be transferred through blessings or "radiant connection-waves" but also offered in a pill or by sprinkling drops of water. They might also be conveyed through touch, sound, or meditation.[18]

For a taste of the healing bliss energetically available through Tibetan medicine, continue to the following exercise, which I developed based on my own understanding of Tibetan medicine.

EXERCISE: **Receiving a Tibetan Blessing**

Concentrate on a healing need and ask the Divine to present you with a noteworthy lama, one who will individualize this healing for you.

(Most lamas are male, but there are a few exceptions so you can picture a man or a woman, depending on your own beliefs.) Picture this lama in your mind's eye as he asks that what he does for you will also bless all other beings and visualizes a seed syllable or mantra composed by the Great Void. This seed syllable manifests the essence of a meditational deity.

Watch as the lama projects this deity onto the top of your head with much love. Lights from the three main places of the deity—the head, throat, and heart—are absorbed into your own comparable chakras:

- The light on your forehead purifies your karmic actions and subtle channels
- The light on your throat cleanses your speech and emotions, as well as the winds
- The light on your heart washes your mind, mental distortions, and *thigle*
- At your navel (or again at your heart) the light purifies your habits and negative subtle tendencies

A poison within each chakra must be transmuted in order to achieve harmony, and the final purification is drawing the poisons out of each chakra so that the winds held in the base of your central channel, where the three main channels meet, activate the red-drop essence. The resulting heat now burns away the poisons. The cleansed energies of the chakras can now turn into deities in the mandalas within each chakra. The heat from the *thigle* reaches the crown chakra and the white drops melt and then descend from the head down the central column, pervading your entire being. The blessings may now land completely.[19]

Channel Wheels Versus Chakras: Differences Between Systems

As esoteric author and energy practitioner Lisa Erickson has explored, there are several differences worth noting between Tibetan Buddhist and Indian chakra systems. Most Tibetan Buddhism lineages incorporate "channel wheels," which are analogous to the chakras.

Differences include the numbers of chakras. Hindu-based yoga mapping locates the seven major chakras at the root, abdomen, solar plexus, heart, throat, forehead, and crown. Tibetan Buddhist systems can incorporate anywhere between four and ten channel wheels. However, some Tibetan Buddhists suggest that all Tibetan systems are reflections of the basic ten-channel wheel system.

In the Hindu yogic tradition the third chakra is in the solar plexus, while the related Tibetan Buddhist center is just below the navel. The nadis and energy channels, respectively assigned to the Hindu yogic and Tibetan Buddhist systems, also differ slightly, as do some of the colors, symbols, mantras, and visualization techniques used to open the chakras or channel wheels. In Tibetan Buddhism meditation techniques are passed down from teacher to student, and this isn't usually the case in most classical Indian systems. And finally, the Hindu system involves moving kundalini from the base of the spine upward. Tibetan Buddhists emphasize the opening of the channel wheels as doorways to move wind into the central channel. This process might occur from the base upward but could also involve concentrating on different channels one at a time or even moving energy downward from the crown.[20]

Of course, the similarities are also obvious—and both similarities and differences are important. As Alfred Nobel once said, "One can state, without exaggeration, that the observation of and the search for similarities and differences are the basis of all human knowledge."[21]

The Vajra Diamond Body

All that glitters is not gold—sometimes it's a diamond. The diamond body is one name for the Tibetan Buddhistic vajra body,

which can be seen through a variety of cultures and philosophies.

In Hinduism and Buddhism the Sanskrit word *vajra* means "diamond," "adamantine," and "thunderbolt." Mainly in Hinduism, the last word refers to a thunderbolt or mystical weapon often wielded by the god Indra. Because a diamond is pure and indestructible, it is analogous to enlightenment, or the absolute reality of *shunyata* or "emptiness." As such, the vajra body could indicate the entire subtle body. In addition to the terms already covered, this body is also equated to the light or rainbow body in Tibetan Buddhism, the immortal body in Hermeticism, and the *wujud al-aqdas* or "most sacred body" in Sufism.

From the highest perspective, the vajra body is our gateway to a primordial and clear light mind that is uncovered as we embrace our life lessons. In some contemporary circles, the diamond body is also defined as a sacred space created around an individual using divine consciousness. Whether we embrace the Hindu, Buddhist, or more New Age views, our mental clutter, both personal and collective, inhibits our access to the vajra body; hence, we must concentrate on the vital points of this body—the chakras—to make way for our clear light mind.

From a more detailed perspective, the vajra body set within the Tibetan Buddhistic framework consists of the subtle structures described in the Tibetan section: energy channels, energy winds, and energy drops. In the Kalachakra tradition these three vajra body components interact with six chakras, which are linked to the body's six basic elemental constituents: earth, water, fire, wind, space, and gnosis or consciousness.

Kadampa Buddhism, one form of Vajrayana Buddhism, contains the practice of Buddha Heruka. This is a high yoga tantra that invites the development of the "truth body," another name for the vajra body, through concentrating on the wrathful

aspect of one form of Buddha, named Heruka. *Heruka* is Sanskrit for the emptiness leading to the great bliss.

Another term for this truth body is *chakrasambara*. As we know, *chakra* means "wheel" and *sambara* means "supreme bliss." Heruka tantra helps us strip dualism from our lives and gain oneness with Heruka, who is also an Indian god as well as Buddha's mind of compassion.

Inner alchemy also exists within Taoism. Teaching that everyone can find their own truth, the alchemical substances are considered produced within the self. These substances transform the three treasures into the diamond or vajra body, also called the immortal body. This is an indestructible essence that opens the gate to immortality and is composed of a sort of sacred emptiness.

Thousands of practices are used to engage this clear light mind, and these differ according to tradition. In the Tsongkapa system we are encouraged to use meditation to gradually dissolve our issues. The Chakrasamvara systems encourage the generation of an inner flame called the *tummo*, opening to four levels of joyous awareness. The Guhyasamaja system uses quite sophisticated practices involving the energy winds. Basically, however, there are two approaches to achieving the enlightened state. We either transform ourselves with practices including the vajra body or not.[22]

EXERCISE: **Meditating on the Vajra Body**

If you would like to experience one of the many ways of connecting with your vajra body, consider meditating upon the compassionate nature and bliss of Heruka. Focus on the following statement while you imagine Heruka, who has a blue body, four faces, twelve arms, and a long necklace of human heads (representing wisdom):

> From the state of bliss and emptiness, like a cloud arising from an empty sky, I can instantly appear as Buddha Heruka. I, too, can be the one of compassion and wisdom.[23]

Kalachakra Tantra: Stars Across Time

The Kalachakra Tantric system is an important and highly unusual tradition within Tibetan Buddhism. It embraces the tantric deity of Vajrayana Buddhism and a shared set of philosophies, yet it also incorporates complicated understandings of astrology, energy cycles, and the subtle body.

Some masters assert that Kalachakra is the most advanced form of the Vajrayana practice; several Dalai Lamas, including the first, second, and fourteenth, have followed it. Consequently, it holds a prominent position in medical and astrological institutes in Tibet, Mongolia, and other parts of Central Asia.

According to tradition, the Buddha taught the Kalachakra Tantra more than 2,800 years ago in southern India. As the fourteenth Dalai Lama shared (who interprets Kalachakra through the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism), those of us questioning this time period—as the Gautama wasn't born yet—must note that the teachings were given to adepts in a mystical state; therefore, the physical Buddha didn't have to be present. Rather, the teachings were presented by the Buddha who predicted Gautama's enlightenment.

The main audience for these teachings was the rulers of the northern region of Shambhala, where this wisdom was preserved. In the tenth century CE, two travelers attempted to find this utopian land but instead were struck with visions of it and teachings that included the Kalachakra material. These travelers became one source of the Kalachakra tradition. Other sources include Tibetan translators who translated Indian and Buddhist teachings into Tibetan, which gave rise to other Tibetan commentaries. Over time, various Kalachakra lineages have been formed, and it is now a popular philosophy in the West mainly because of its connection with the myth of Shangri-la, a hidden earthly paradise comparable to Shambhala.

While the journey to Shambhala/Shangri-la is written about in guidebooks, the journey is a physical one only to a point. It is truly a spiritual pilgrimage.

Kalachakra revolves around the concept of time (*kala*) and cycles (*chakras*), and it is a method for working with the body's subtle energies on the path to enlightenment. The system presents three main cycles—external, internal, and alternative—to deal with our relationship with time, using alternative-based practices to gain liberation from the other two cycles. The problem with external and internal time is that they cause continual rebirth, which is driven by energetic impulses called "winds of karma." Karma is defined as a mind-based force that confuses us about reality, convincing us that what we see is actually concrete rather than often-foolish projections formed from perception. One of the ways that specific Kalachakra followers free themselves from karma is to participate in a form of anuttarayoga tantra. There are many types of anuttarayoga tantra, which invite participants into practices that support them in personally releasing themselves from the negative cycles of time. Through Kalachakra, participants can receive a group initiation to assist in this process. In this way we can free ourselves personally as well as from the collective karma controlling us all. The process begins with an initiation and continues through meditative practices concentrating on the Buddha figure called Kalachakra.[24]

More about the main distinctions among these three Kalachakra cycles follows:

External Kalachakra: External Kalachakra refers to the outer world, which supports life. This world is composed of the six elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and gnosis or wisdom and objects of smell, sight, taste, touch, sound, and dharma. Mt. Meru is the center of the cosmic universe and is surrounded by four continents and eight subcontinents, with the solar system circling Mt. Meru's peak. This system is dictated by time cycles and described as the procession of external solar and lunar days.

Internal Kalachara: This is our inner world, consisting of the body and mind of all living beings and our psychophysical, sensory, and psychic capacities. It includes six types of living beings (gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts that feed off the living, and hell-beings, which are abusive and angry); six chakras; ten vital energies or winds; energy channels; and, in many Kalachakra systems, eight drops, which is four more than found in most Tibetan systems. Drops are vital subtle male and female energies of the body. The four main drops are of waking state, the dream state, the deep sleep, and sexual ecstasy. Through practices, these transform into empty body, unconfused sound, non-conceptual wisdom, and unchanging bliss, respectively. But, as said, in many Kalachakra systems these four drops are "counted twice," with four located in the upper vajra and four in the lower vajra. In the lower vajra the drop of waking state is in the navel, the drop of dreams is at the secret chakra, the drop of deep sleep is at the base of the jewel (clitoris or penis), and the drop of sexual ecstasy is at the tip of the jewel. In the higher vajra the drop of the waking state is at the forehead, the drop of dreams is at the throat, the drop of deep sleep is at the heart, and the drop of sexual ecstasy is at the navel. This Kalachakra arena deals with the astrological relationships between the internal energies, chakras, channels, and drops in relationship to beliefs, emotions, physical organs, and transformational processes. The basic belief is that the body's subtle energies should move in synchronicity with the planet's cycles.

Alternative Kalachakra: This division holds the spiritual methods that lead to enlightenment through initiations—usually ten practical and an eleventh that is transcendental—and generative and completion stages of yoga, which can purify the other cycles.[25]

It's easier to understand the system of Kalachakra if you understand more fully the parts played within it by subtle energies. While considerable similarities between the Kalachakra Tibetan Buddhism systems have already

been covered, there are enough differences that here I will present the full system, regardless of their similarities.

The Subtle Story of Kalachakra Tantra

The Kalachakra Tantric system embraces a subtle body made of particles invisible to the human eye. These three main components compose living bodies but are also analogous to centrifugal energy, planetary speed, and orbiting planets:

- Energy channels through which flow energy winds that contain the chakra wheels, often called nodes in Kalachakra
- Subtle vibrations or "speech"
- Creative drops, which are red or white

In the next section, after introducing these structures and their subdivisions, I will describe them in-depth individually and in relationship to each other.

Energy Channels

The Tibetan term for subtle energy channels, *tsa*, means "roots." On the gross level, winds of the breath course through the gross channels of the respiratory system, sustaining life. The subtle energy winds course through the subtle channels, providing energy for motion, digestion, and the senses. Spiritual practices enable these winds to dissolve at the six chakras of the central channel, which are located at the crown of head, forehead, throat, heart, navel, and pubic region. The mind is part of these winds. As we dissolve the mind, we bring higher awareness to the subtle level and eventually end up with a clear light mind.

Subtle Speech

Besides using speech in the gross or physical way, we must also control our subtle speech. Speech is represented by the drop of sleep, and, as discussed, is found in the both the throat and pubic chakras or nodes. Speech could be described as internal and external. At one level speech is purely vibrational and at another it involves the breath and respiratory channels of the nose, throat, and lungs.

Subtle speech is parallel to sensory speech but occurs in the subtle energy system, where we use subtle sounds inside the central energy channel. These sounds draw the energy winds inside the central channel to dissolve our blocks. The process involves visualizing and uttering the seed syllables related to the chakras or specific intentions.

Creative Drops

As explored, subtle creative drops are another vital part of the Kalachakra subtle system. A wise assortment of subtle drops pass through the invisible channels of the subtle body; however, there are eight stationary subtle creative drops.

As discussed under "Internal Kalachakra," many versions of Kalachakra propose eight instead of four drops. However, these are basically the same four drops—waking, dreaming, sleep, and sexual ecstasy—found in two different regions of the vajra body and, therefore, different chakras. We manifest by using their energy. Because the base drops are the same, I'll refer to these eight drops as four drops.

The winds of karma are drawn to these drops and carry all four karmic potentials (waking, dreaming, sleep, and sexual ecstasy) to the chakras. Each state has a specific wind of karma associated with it. We eliminate these winds of karma through our clear light mind to purify the four subtle drops.[26]

In general, the Kalachakra subtle system is truly one of "as above, so below." For instance, the earth contains twelve pilgrimage sites that are also mirrored in the body, each site described with the twelve characteristics of a transmigratory or journeying experience. In turn, these sites are linked with the twelve signs of the zodiac, which start with spiritual ignorance and end with death. This progression mirrors the flow of prana in the chakras—the six bodily chakras just depicted as well as six cosmic chakras.

Regarding the cosmic chakras, the summit is Mt. Meru, which contains the Bhagavan Kalacakra, which has sixteen petals and constitutes the bliss chakra (*ananda chakra*) of the cosmic body. The cosmic chakras, like the subtle chakras, are related to elemental mandalas of gnosis/wisdom, earth, water,

fire, air/wind, and space. The gnosis chakra has eight spokes and occupies two-thirds of the earth mandala. The earth chakra is in half of the salty ocean and the water chakra is in the other half. The fire chakra is in half of the fire mandala and the wind chakra is in the other half. The space chakra is in half of the wind mandala, and in the space mandala there are sixteen pilgrimage sites.

A tantric adept undertakes an internal pilgrimage to purify the bodily chakras with a six-phase yoga practice, which in turn purifies the external chakras of the environment. Through a complicated explanation of the four directions, we learn that there are actually forty-eight pilgrimage sites, with the twelve pilgrimage sites also linked to the twelve joints in the body, which must also be purified.[27]

There is yet another concept I want to explain in regard to the chakras—one that is present in many forms of Buddhism. The Kalachakra system portrays the six "Buddha families" as present in each of the six chakras. A Buddha family is an ancient Buddhist explanation of the enlightened mind and its various aspects. A vital component of Buddhist tantra, a Buddha family creates a mandala composed of parts of the mind, each of which can also be distorted, in which case it represents a neurosis.[28]

While some Buddhist systems employ between three, four, and even five Buddha families, the Kalachakra system can engage upward of six, which carry the following names and traits: Varocana, the wheel family representing the body; Ratnasambhava, the jewel family for action and good qualities; Amitabha, the lotus family for speech; Amoghasiddhi, the karma family for action (ruled by the jewel family) and the ability to influence self and others; Aksobhya, the vajra family for mind; and Vajrasattva of the cleaver or curved knife family, representing clear mental activity. These are also present within the chakras.[29]

Digging Deeper: Details About the Subtle Kalachakra Structures

Having just gained an overall sense of the Kalachakra, you are prepared to dive even deeper into even more intricacies of its subtle structures.

There are many viewpoints about the subtle structures in this Tibetan system. For the detailing I present here, I am employing the work of Changkya Rolpa Dorje, born in 1717, who learned at the feet of a great master and was the author of the biography of the seventh Dalai Lama. I like his account because it is so clear; it was translated by Gavin Kilty and described in Edward Arnold's book *As Long As Space Endures*.[30] Other sources of information in this section include gnostic insights and Kalachakra yoga experts.[31] For another well-respected view, I would encourage you to explore Khedrup Norsang Gyatso's book *Ornament of Stainless Light*.[32]

Channels

According to the system Dorje described, there are three main channels—the central, left, and right—all located inside the life channel hosted by the spine, somewhat closer to the rear than the front. The upper tips of the channels curve forward inside the skull and drop down from the crown to a point midway between the eyebrows. Located here is the opening of the left and right channels down to the left and right nostrils, with the central channel found midway between these two. The lower openings of all three channels reach down to the tip of the vajra opening.

These channels are described as follows:

- The central channel (*dhuti)* is the "channel which eliminates," pertinent to the other two channels as well as several others. It is black and carries wind.
- The right channel (*rasana)* represents the sun and wisdom. It is red and carries blood, and, in women, also menstrual blood. It is therefore considered a feminine channel.
- The left channel (*lalana*) signifies the moon and methods or practices. It is white and carries mainly seminal fluid. *Note:* Many practitioners believe that the seminal fluid is simply "sexual energy" and therefore this masculine channel is similar in men and women.

The dhuti channel continues below the navel as the sankhini, which curves to the right and belongs to the gnosis element. It is blue and carries seminal

fluid, and it is also called the kalagni channel. The continuation of the right channel is known as the pingala (a term that will be familiar from the classical Hindu system of nadis covered elsewhere in this book). It curves to the left, is of the air element, is black, and carries urine. The mesa channel continues the left channel below the navel. It travels down the middle of the body, is of the earth element, is yellow, and carries excrement. In all, there are six major upper and lower major channels. The higher three carry a life-sustaining wind and the lower three carry mainly the downward-expelling wind. (I will more completely define the winds after describing the chakras.)

There are also twelve main channels at the navel, and the eight channel petals at the heart further divide into channels, and in turn those channels divide for a total of 72,000 channels in all.

In the Kalachakra system the chakra petals are considered channels. The number of actual petals depends on the system. For instance, in one Kalachakra system there are 152 petals; in the Heruka tantra system there are 120 petals. The importance of adding the petals to the channel count is that all chakras are innate at conception, but they aren't awakened. The number of petals on a chakra shows how many days it takes for that chakra to mature in utero. For instance, in a system in which there are thirty-two petals in the crown, that chakra would require thirty-two days in utero to develop. However, this maturation doesn't bring the chakra and its representative being to a fully active state. The chakras and their petals are only considered complete at about one year of age. Conceivably after this, however, further maturation must occur in the adult through yoga practices.[33]

Chakras

The chakras are as follows, each described in relation to an element, color, and number of petals. It's important to know that there are also "empty petals," which are considered petals that don't hold any winds. Illustration 63 depicts this version of the Kalachakra six-chakra system.

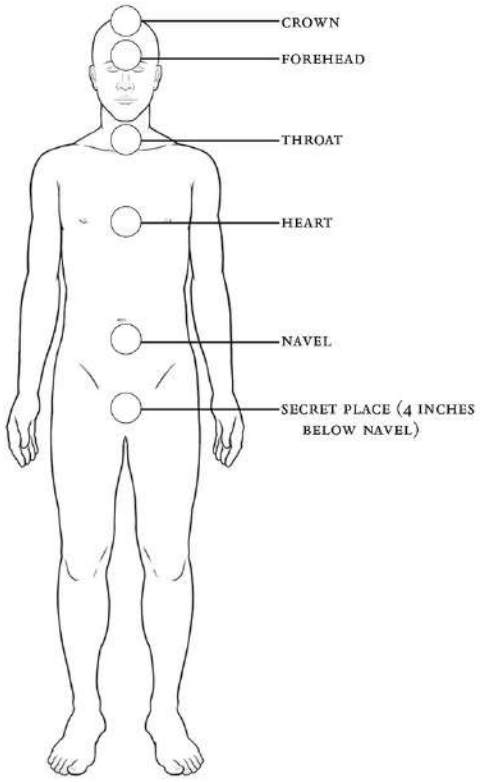

ILLUSTRATION 63—THE KALACHAKRA SIX-CHAKRA SYSTEM: There are six basic chakras in the Kalachakra Tibetan system. These can be described in terms of color, element, and number of petals. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Crown: Space chakra, green, four petals

Forehead: Water chakra, white, four inner petals, eight intermediate petals, and four outer petals, two of which are empty

Throat: Fire chakra, red, four inner petals, eight intermediate petals, and thirty-two outer petals, four of which are empty

Heart: Air chakra, black, eight petals

Navel: Earth chakra, yellow, four inner petals, eight intermediate petals, and sixteen outer petals, four of which are empty. The other twelve outer petals subdivide: six branch off the right channel and represent the houses of the sun's northern passage—Capricorn, Pisces, Taurus, Cancer, Virgo, and Scorpio. The other six branch off from the left channel and correspond to the six houses of the sun's southern passage

—Aquarius, Aries, Gemini, Leo, Libra, and Sagittarius. Outside of these, each of the twelve splits off into five petals to make sixty-four (including the four empty petals).

Secret Place: The gnosis chakra is blue and has six inner, ten intermediate, and sixteen outer petals, or thirty-two in all. (This method of counting differs from how the petals of chakras including the navel are counted, in which the inner and intermediate petals are not included in the final count.)

Winds

The ten main winds are critical components of the subtle system and are these: life-sustaining wind, downwardly expelling wind, coexisting wind, upwardly moving wind, pervading wind, naga wind, turtle wind, lizard wind, devadatta wind, and dhanamjaya wind. Each of these winds flows through a different petal in the heart chakra, many of them in a "double-up" style. For instance, the coexisting wind and turtle wind flow through the east and southeastern petals of the heart chakra.

From the ten winds of the heart chakra, winds flow to other chakras as well as the channels in the body. This means that the winds of the body are permeated by the ten winds of the heart. There are twelve great winds that change direction every number of breaths from different petals in the body. All told, the winds flow 1,800 times in each channel every day. Each flows in a different order of elements on the right and left. For instance, the winds in the right channels dispense the elements in this order: earth, water, fire, air, space, and then earth again. The winds in the left channels distribute the elements in this order: space, air, fire, water, earth and then space again. Basically, however, a great wind shift occurs in the body about every two hours, in relationship with a new zodiacal ascendant appearing on the horizon.

The complexity of the Kalachakra Tantra system is one of the reasons it is so respected—and difficult to understand and describe.

Drops

We've already fully explored the drops. Additional noteworthy details include the fact that the drops at the throat, navel, and secret are infused with more red than white. The white is more predominant at the crown and lower end of the central channel, as well as the vajra jewel. The red element at the navel is the source of all red elements in the body, and the white element in the crown is the source of all white elements in the body. In the heart, white and red are equal in quantity.

In the end, as complicated as the system is—and here I have only touched the surface—the Dalai Lama's words point to an underlying truth:

> This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.[34]

Himalayan Bon: A Tibetan Energy System

Also called Bonpo, Bonism, and Benism and often referred to as Yungdrung Bon in modern times, Bon is a religious tradition of Tibet. It is also known as Himalayan Bonpo because it was started in the Tibetan Himalayas, when *bon* denoted a certain type of priest who could relate to local spirits and ensure well-being in the afterlife.

As a religion it arose in the eleventh century and developed based on visions from spiritual sensitives including Loden Nyingpo, who lived in the fourteenth century.[35] However, some writings state that Bon beliefs originated in the ninth and tenth centuries and incorporated Buddhistic beliefs, while oral tradition asserts that it began seventeen thousand years ago. These interplays over time led certain historians to suggest that there are three strands of Bon:

- Pre-Buddhism practices of Tibet and the Tibetans in Nepal focused on the personage of a divine king
- Strong shamanic and animistic beliefs from Tibet and Nepal (from the tenth and eleventh centuries BCE) that some believe are related to Buddhism

- Shamanic beliefs focused on deities and possession simply ascribed to, but not related to, Bon

In 1978 the Dalai Lama recognized the Bon religion as its own school with unique practices.[36]

I will mainly feature the Bon subtle system as taught by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, a modern lama (teacher) in the Tibetan Bon tradition who explains the wheels (*khorlos*)—the chakras—as pranic or life-energy centers. As you review Rinpoche's understanding of Bon, know that his ideas incorporate only part of the many ideas that have evolved—and been lost—over time.

The Subtle World of Himalayan Bon

Bon outlines nine categories of teachings, also called the Nine Ways or Nine Vehicles. Each incorporates a unique set of characteristics, practices, and results. The lower levels include medicine and astrology, and the highest is termed the Great Perfection, considered a path for enlightenment. The goal of the process is to attain a rainbow body at death, at which point the five gross elements forming us transform into clear light, so the body is now a rainbow of every color.

The five elements are considered measurable components of the physical body, emanating from the Great Mother or Creator as subtle energies. In their original state they are five pure lights, each represented by a color:

- Space, white or colorless
- Air, green
- Fire, red
- Water, blue
- Earth, yellow

We achieve healing by balancing these elements, and when unbalanced they can create diseases and other problems. According to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the main imbalance is negative emotions. When we shift our perceptions from negative to positive, we improve our health and promote spiritual maturity.

The main method for this process is to conduct spiritual practices in the six realms of existences—the lokas, considered dimensions and planes as well as classes of sentient beings. Each loka is also related to a specific chakra and is considered indwelling, or in the body.

There are six major centers. When stirred by our experiences, the beings living within the loka become animate and trigger the issues lying within the correlated chakra. As we work on these issues, we transform ourselves.

To work within the chakra, an individual performs yoga to tap into the positive qualities dormant in the chakras, typically using sound and visualization in the form of a seed syllable or mantra, as well as symbolic gestures and practices, to open the latent chakra powers. As the system is grounded in body-based disciplines, it is considered a tantric practice, using yoga to achieve enlightenment.

At a structural level chakras are energetic crossroads of gross, subtle, or extremely subtle channels, which number between 84,000 and 360,000, depending on the approach. As in most energetic systems, there are three main channels: the central and two side channels, all carrying prana, or life energy. Illustration 63 shows a representation of the Tibetan chakra system, based on six chakras. (Other systems have different numbers.)[37]

EXERCISE: **Clearing Winds Exercise**

Tibetan traditions state that when the subtle energy channels are clear and the winds (prana) flow through unimpeded, we are clear in mind and body. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche presents five Tsa Lung exercises, practices that use the wind/prana in the body to clear the chakras and the channels between them. The word for lung is the same as for wind. To clear the senses and open your crown chakra, you can use his first exercise, which I have adapted from his book *Awakening the Sacred Body*.[38]

Sit quietly and feel the presence of your central channel. Now follow it upward to the crown chakra, linked with what is boundless and vast. Embrace the space that pervades all existence.

Now reflect upon an issue that has been blocking you from this natural state. Feel the cloudiness that this negativity creates and imagine it bound within a cloud. Now exhale this foggy energy through your throat chakra, inhaling a fresh and pure breath to replace it. Hold this breath as you might nectar, creating a subtle heat that spreads through the central channel to your crown.

Exhale and then inhale again. Holding your breath, turn your head five times to the left and then five times to the right. Feel the *lung,* or subtle breath, move up through the central channel to the crown, cleansing your senses and issues as it flows. Release your breath through your nostrils, first slowly and then vehemently, pulling in at your diaphragm. As you eliminate this powerful and gross breath, imagine the subtle breath shooting upward through the central channel and into your crown, carrying all obstacles with it. These obstacles dissolve into the space above your head, and you can now rest in the beautiful vastness of your crown. Repeat as needed, between one and seven times, resting after every three repetitions.[39]

Tibet is an ancient land of deep mysteries and profound wisdom. Within it nestle dozens of different subtle systems, some unique, others a blend of concepts from other cultures. In this chapter we explored the dominant presence of Buddhism in Tibetan subtle systems, along with oft-interweaving concepts of tantra.

After examining the major forms of Buddhism, we explored arrangements of subtle systems, including those from Tibetan Buddhism, Kalachakra Tantra, Tibetan medicine, and Himalayan Bon. We met actors including the chakras as well as channels, winds, wheels, drops, and the vajra body, a sacred space that invites forth our higher self. All told, we learned even more about the amazing complexity of chakraology.

In line with this sentiment, we now journey even farther afield into the rest of Asia, highlighting even more chakra-like energies that contribute to Asian energetics.

[contents]

Other Asian Chakra Systems

FROM WONDER INTO wonder
existence opens.

LAO-TZU

Chakra medicine has appeared across Asia in many forms and consistently across dozens of cultures. While the Vedic energy system developed in areas such as India and the meridians within countries such as China, both approaches are more similar than different. Each features a core channel of energy running through the torso, energy points, energy channels, and vital life energy. As was already featured in chapter 21, chakras—which didn't originally exist in the Traditional Chinese Medicine model—correspond to various acupuncture points. And as you shall see in this section, many chakra medicine concepts have been incorporated into various other Asian energy systems, perhaps because of the spread of Buddhism and more recently the Internet.[1]

As you peruse the systems in this section, which highlights chakra medicine concepts, know that these are just the highlights of the various models. I will start in China, where we delve into Taoism. Taoism is featured here rather than qigong or other TCM processes because it is inclusive of the major energetic ideas already featured in this book; as well, I have already discussed several Asian concepts in other chapters. Within this section I will also introduce you to reflexology, an ancient tradition throughout Asia. I will then briefly discuss the role of the hara line in Zen before traveling to Korea, where I'll showcase a chakra-based system with roots in Korea's history. I'll round out the journey in Thailand and Japan, revealing systems that are also inclusive of chakra concepts before highlighting a holistic healing system incorporating acupoints, body zones, and chakras developed by acupuncturist

Dr. Naoki Kubota. Finally, I'll describe a newer form of healing that cements chakras and Asian energetic ideas. Exercises populate this section to help you better understand Asian perspectives on chakra medicine.

Taoist Alchemy and the Microcosmic Orbit

Like kundalini and tantra, Taoist alchemy is a term that describes a variety of practices that have been important over time, especially in Asia. Taoism (also called Daoism) is a collection of concepts that make up what is referred to as "the path" or "the way" of living. It includes theories about diet, breathing, exercise, and the use of herbs and philosophies. The goal is to bring us closer to the natural order we have separated from.

Taoism first began in China in the time of Confucius, perhaps the most famous Chinese philosopher, who lived between 600 and 500 BCE. The Confucians adhered to a strict set of rituals and laws of etiquette while the Taoists were more "unusual," roaming the countryside, performing feats of martial arts, and more. It was said that they had mastered the secret of life.[2]

The most famous Taoist was Lao-tzu, a sixth-century Chinese sage who wrote the *Tao Te Ching*. Along with the writings of Chuang Tzu (Zhuangzi), an influential Chinese philosopher who lived around the fourth century BCE, these texts are the foundation of Taoism. Integrated within are key tantric concepts such as yin and yang (similar to Shakti and Shiva), the five elements, and the use of divination, exorcism, and practices for achieving ecstasy.

Tantra and Taoism embrace many of the same concepts. Some sects, for instance, emphasize the art of sacred sexuality as a means of achieving union. Tantra can, however, employ more ceremony and ritual while Taoists emphasize the body, meridians, and energy systems.[3]

Taoism has millions of followers worldwide, many of whom live in China (where it is indigenous), Taiwan, or Southeast Asia. Basically Taoism encompasses an esoteric spiritual view, rituals that employ elixirs (both physical and energetic), and exercises to facilitate mystical awareness.

Taoist alchemy emphasizes a process of transformation similar to kundalini rising: the need to employ a microcosmic inner fire that passes through cardinal points to create an "inner copulation" that soars to the brain, uniting the brain with the nervous system. A bright light will now manifest between the eyes and act like a mysterious gate to higher wisdom.[4]

This tradition involves two approaches: internal and external alchemy. Early on, most practitioners were devoted to external alchemy, using tools including mercury, lead, crystals, flower essences, and herbs to achieve longevity and mystical goals. The wisest masters, however, realized that internal alchemy could combine the body's energies with the earth and cosmos and enable a transformation into immortality and happiness. Eventually, adepts discovered that the microcosmic orbit—a pathway through which the distilled essence of internal energy runs up the spine and down the front of the body—could be used to fuse external forces into the immortal body. As you might already have guessed, the Taoist system is a very complete structure, containing all the main ingredients of chakra medicine, including the five elements, the meridians, six healing sounds, and the use of chakra-like energy bodies such as the dantian. Together, these and other factors formulate a highly complex and esoteric subtle energy system, which I will describe as simply as possible in this section.[5]

The Taoist Tradition

As a religion, Taoism (or Daoism) has existed in China for more than twenty-five hundred years, although it incorporates shamanic practices at least six thousand years old. It has been associated with philosophers including Lao-tzu and Chuang Tzu, but it is really an amalgam of indigenous and occult practices.

The word *tao* literally means "way" or "path," and it is exactly that: a journeyway to the heart of the sublime as well as a road toward bodily rejuvenation and increased longevity. In Taoism everything is a seamless web of unbroken movement and change. Our role is to cultivate harmony within this flux.

We typically consider harmony a trait worth cultivating but not worth hurting others over. However, long ago, Chinese emperors strove to harness Taoist yogis, specifically their magical abilities, to read others' minds, control the weather, and manipulate or harm others from a distance. The yogis refused and countered by protecting their knowledge. The result was a piecemeal set of practices, the secrets of which were held by only a select few.

The communist suppression of the religion in the 1950s and 1960s forced many Taoists underground. As told by Master Mantak Chia, a well-known contemporary Taoist teacher, so frightened were the Chinese leaders of these mystical adepts that they once burned a thousand Taoist yogis who were immobilized in meditative trances in the Five Sacred Mountains of central China. These hermits seemingly didn't need to eat, sleep, or even breathe. They didn't even awaken when the soldiers doused them with gasoline and lit them afire, so busy were their souls visiting other lands.

The end result is that until relatively recently, the population at large has had little information about Taoist alchemy. Master Mantak Chia is changing this. Born in 1944, he learned internal alchemy from an accomplished Taoist adept and other Thai monks when quite young, and then in his twenties went on to study kundalini yoga with an Indian yogi. He is knowledgeable about several other mystical systems, and Chia's work is one of the main sources of information in this section.[6]

Lessons from a Taoist Monk

Robert Piper is a meditation instructor who studied with a Taoist monk for more than nine years. During that time he gathered the following wisdom, which we could all put into practice:

- Try until you get it right—at least three times.
- The answer to a question lies inside. As an old Chinese proverb says, "Teachers open the door, but you must enter by

yourself."

- Real wisdom comes from doing something and failing. Struggling makes you stronger.
- When you start meditation, you recognize an egotistical mind —and then you can start to live a life not driven by your ego.
- You must be compassionate and also resilient. Weakness will not get you to your goal.
- Patience really is a virtue. It is the gift of inner calm.
- Detach from your ego. This makes it easier to accept whatever goes your way—or doesn't.
- "No self, no enemy." Fears, worries, and insecurities grow inside of you. By detaching from these, you won't have an enemy outside of yourself.
- Happiness comes from internal and external sources. You find happiness within but you must also share it with others in a purposeful way, which will increase your joy.[7]

A Featured Hsien: Taoist Grand Master Chang San-Feng

The Grand Master Chang San-feng was a Taoist priest born in 1247 CE and said to have lived to age two hundred. Some legends have called him a *hsien* (Chinese term) or *xian*, a Taoist term for an immortal, alchemist, wizard, and transcendent being. As such, he was immune to heat and cold and untouched by elements. He could fly and live on dew and air, and he aged very slowly. Living in the Wudang Mountain in China, he was one of the early founders of a culture that has been associated with Taoist studies and practices, TCM, herbal research, internal martial arts,

meditation, and increased longevity.[8] (Some schools distinguish internal martial arts from external martial arts. The internal approach concentrates on spiritual, mental, and chi-related development. The external approach concerns itself with physiological development.)

I think he probably would have agreed with this statement from Taoist philosophy, courtesy of Lao-tzu: "Those who know do not speak. Those who speak do not know." [9]

The Taoist Subtle World

The Taoist world is based on three treasures or jewels, substances that are important in Taoist inner alchemy practices as well as in qigong. These three energies are called *jing*, *chi*, and *shen*, usually translated as essence, vitality, and spirit. They can be thought of as three different frequencies—a fitting concept, as we exist on a continuum of frequencies.

As I covered in chapter 21, there are three dantian that occupy a significant role in Taoism: the lower in the navel, the middle in the solar plexus, and the upper in the brain. These are considered elixir fields or cinnabar fields in Taoism, three loci of control that play a role in our breathing, meditation, and internal alchemy practices (*neidan*). Neidan, or internal alchemy, is a Taoist set of esoteric practices aimed at increasing longevity. They are physical, mental, and spiritual, and they also create an immortal spiritual body that transcends death. The body is considered a sort of cauldron for this transformational process. While the ultimate goal is enlightenment, the Taoist approach is different than the Buddhist. Buddhists aim for an absolute spiritual awakening through purity with an emphasis on liberation from the body; Taoist inner alchemists embrace the body as a vital part of the alchemical process. Mantak Chia calls the spiritual body the "Golden Light Body."

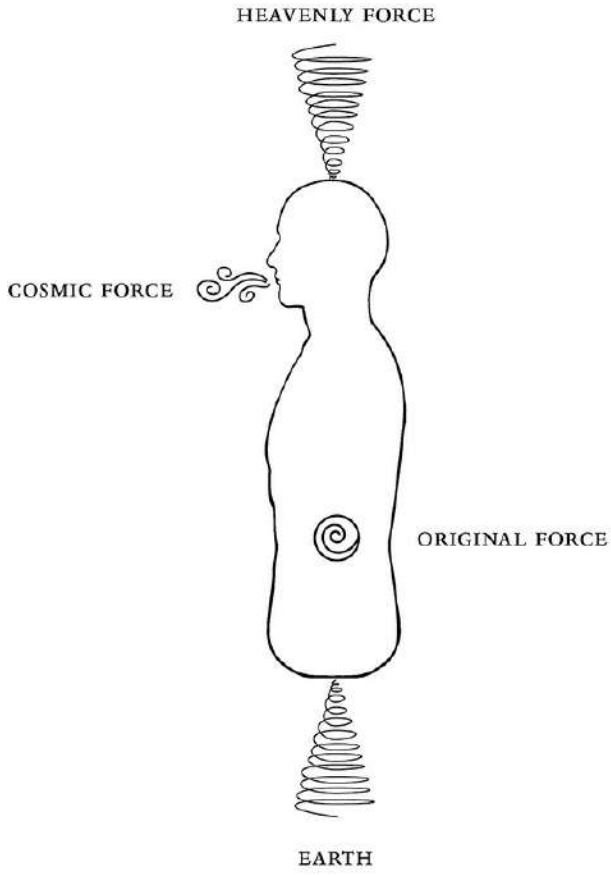

ILLUSTRATION 64—THE FOUR TAOIST FORCES: We are born with prenatal or original force, which we can lose as we age. It can be recharged by accessing the other three main forces: heavenly, cosmic, and earth. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

The dantian establish a three-part division of inner space and are linked with the three treasures in this way:

- Lower dantian or cinnabar field is the seat of jing. Found a bit below or behind the navel, it is also called the Gate of Vital Force (*mingmen*), the Origin of the Pass (*guanyuan*), and the Ocean of Breath (*qihai*). It circulates essence so as to generate the inner elixir through both the internal and external navels. In the internal we gather and blend chi. The external navel is the front door of the lower dantian and lies deep in the body. It is known as the cauldron, the Taoist site for gathering, blending, and cooking the energies of the body, mind, and spirit for spiritual transformation.

- The middle dantian or cinnabar field is the seat of chi, or breath or energy. It is also called the Yellow Court (*huangting*), Crimson Palace (*jianggong*), or Mysterious Female (*xuanpin*—a representation of yin and yang). Other names inspire other labels, including the Central Palace (*zhonggong*) and One Opening at the Center of the Person (*shenzhong qiuiao*). Here the breath is refined into spirit through the refinement of the lower elixir moving from the lower to the middle dantian.
- The upper dantian or cinnabar field is the seat of the shen, or spirit. It is also called the Muddy Pellet (*niwan*) or Palace of Qian (*qiangong*), representing pure yang. It is divided into nine palaces or chambers arranged in two rows. The word *niwan* represents the upper dantian as a whole as well as the innermost palace or chamber, the third one in the lower row. Moving the inner elixir to this upper dantian marks the last state of neidan, the conversion of spirit to emptiness.[10]

Within this backdrop, our chi circulates through the physical and subtle body in a microscopic orbit that mirrors the macroscopic orbit of universal force in the galaxy. If we don't have enough chi inside, we can't draw on the universal force, and we eventually become depleted. We sicken and age. Each orbit of the earth around the sun is analogous to one round of the macrocosmic orbit, and our microcosmic orbit looks the same.

As you can see in Illustration 64, several types of forces are required for a healthy life. There is our original (prenatal) chi or force, as well as earth force, heavenly force, and cosmic force.[11]

As we increase the chi reserve in (and because of) the microcosmic orbit, energy fills our twelve ordinary meridians and the eight extraordinary meridians. Most important are the governing and conception vessels or channels. The governing channel is the main yang channel of the body, which begins in the perineum, runs to the coccyx, and then climbs up the spinal column. It next rises to the midline of the head to the crown and then

descends in the front of the face, ending at the base of the nose and the upper lip. As you can see, this flow of energy is similar to that described in a kundalini rising, even in its landing spot; many experts assert that kundalini must eventually rest in the sixth chakra. The conception vessel, also called the *ren mo* and the functional channel, is the main yin channel of the body and, through its connection with the governing channel, the microcosmic orbit.Illustration 65 showcases these vessels.

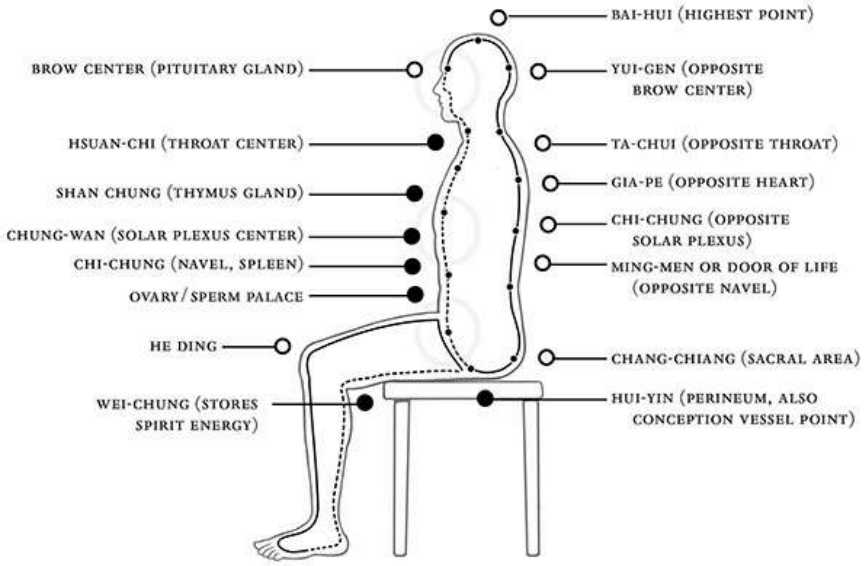

ILLUSTRATION 65—THE MICROCOSMIC ORBIT: The microcosmic orbit circulates energy through the governor and conception channel as well as twelve energy points. When we touch our tongue to our palate, we complete the circuit between the two channels. The ming-men door is an especially important point. It holds the original energy (sometimes called genuine, ancestral, or prenatal) present at conception (some say birth) and serves as a gateway for our vital energy. As you can see by the three large gray circles, the three dantians are located in the lower, middle, and higher regions of the body. *Note:* the solid circles indicate the flow of the conception channel's feminine energy and the open circles show the masculine energy of the governor channel. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

We can perform both a microcosmic orbit (*xiaozhoutian*) and a macrocosmic orbit (*dazhoutian*) to fill the meridians. Both processes involve the dantian,[12] but the macrocosmic orbit extends the microcosmic orbit into the legs and arms.[13]

Taoists associate everything that is dense with a specific kind of subtle energy that can be described using colors. For instance, earth, water, and

plants are blue-green; the spine and bone marrow are white; the higher self and cosmic force are golden; and the universal energy is violet and stepped down through the polestar. The generative force of the earth, as sent through the seven stars of the Big Dipper, is red. Sexual energy in humans is pink, and the unborn Tao, the absolute void from which all spirits emanate, is black.[14]

There are also specific points that are imperative to micro- and macrocosmic circulation, and these also enable access to external vibrations. Eventually a practitioner senses the circulation of the "breath" as heat, set into motion by concentrating on any of the twelve energy centers. While none of these are technically called chakras, you can see in Illustration 65 that seven of the centers lie at the exact location of the Indian chakras. This illustration also shows the circulation of energy through the conception and governing vessels, which results in a unification of vital breath in the brain. This produces golden elixir and a bright light called the *hsuan kuan* or Mysterious Gate, the key to opening to higher consciousness.[15]

In regard to the chakras, Mantak Chia says that the microcosmic orbit balances and integrates all the chakras into a single chakra. This means the chakras aren't individually significant; rather, they are minor nodal points through which flows greater energy. Under this system, no one can open or close a single chakra. The orbit pathway deals with this by rotating the chi up the spine and down the front of the body. This regulates the positively and negatively charged points opposite the chakras, causing them to spin like wheels. If you increase the chi flow in the orbit, the energy flowing through the chakras is amplified and balanced. Eventually these polarized energy currents join together to open a central channel in the body's center, called the Thrusting Channel, which serves as the birth canal for spiritual rebirth as an immortal.

As we expand our consciousness, we attract more frequencies of higher light. The orbit fills with chi, overflows into the meridians and vital organs, and creates the human auric field. This increased energy pulses into the five gates in the feet, perineum, heart/palms of the hands, third eye, and the

crown, linking the personal microcosmic orbit to the three macrocosmic energies of the earth, higher self, and universe.[16]

Apples, Oranges, and Taoist Energy

An Internet article by Elizabeth Reninger reveals how apple and orange science—classical and quantum physics—fold neatly into Taoist practice. She makes the following comparisons:

- **The lower dantian:** The importance of this energy level most likely relates to the presence of the enteric nervous system, the "belly brain," in this region. Accounting for many of our emotional and intuitive reactions, this area can be easily understood as the home of *jing*, the creative energy.
- **The middle dantian:** As has been proven, the heart generates the largest EMF in the human body, nearly five thousand times as strong as that emanating from the brain. The middle dantian, located in the physical heart or solar plexus, can be understood as powerful on many levels, including electromagnetic frequencies as well as the presence of *chi,* or life force.
- **The upper dantian:** Several scientists, including Rupert Sheldrake, explain connectivity through the existence of morphogenetic fields, mind-fields anchored in the brain that energetically link beings in the external world. These fields enable the sharing of memory and learning processes. Located in the middle of the head, this upper home of shen is comparable to these fields.[17]

I would suggest that all of these ideas bring us back to the existence of the Higgs boson, the virtual particle briefly introduced in chapter 19. Commonly called the "God particle," the Higgs boson is really a field that exists everywhere and "everywhen" simultaneously. As Dr. Scroggins pointed out to me through our correspondence, the existence of this field reveals that perhaps God is not only outside but also inside of us; in fact, everything is made of this same universal energy. This would mean that negativity and positivity—yin and yang—aren't only external but internal as well. External

alchemy, the access to the powers of these energies outside of us, certainly is a path to enlightenment. But as Dr. Scroggins put it, enlightenment will "mean more" if we discover that it is already inside.

When we try to bring in more energy than we need, we energetically create a "double positive" or "double negative," pulling ourselves away from the center where we tap into the void. We now spin out of control. The Taoist concept, as well as so many others featured in this book, would explain that the more we avoid *being* God, expecting miraculous intervention, the further we get away from our "God self" or "God particles." We are not superior to the matter in the universe; we are equal to it. We *are* it. We are not light or dark, which themselves are simply variables of the center point. In fact, we can only see the stars in the dark of night.[18] The chakras are important in that they shine against the darkness we call our human foibles. They allow us to unlock the universe we are within.

EXERCISE: **Massaging Away Negative Emotions**

According to Mantak Chia, our world begins and ends with the navel. It is our first connection to our mother through the umbilical cord and serves as the physical center of our body. It is also related to the element of earth. As such, it is the perfect place to work when clearing negative emotions.

The actual navel point related to the lower dantian is just below the navel; however, Mantak prefers working with the navel site itself, as it's more accessible. In fact, by manipulating this spot we can cultivate the entire field of the elixir, which is able to store large caches of chi.

What happens if this area becomes blocked? We can experience problematic and painful emotions, which locate in these small intestine areas:

- Anxiety is linked to the upper intestine.
- Anger lies in the right side of the abdomen.
- Fear inhabits the deeper and lower sides of the intestines.
- Sadness occupies the lower and lateral sides of the intestines.

• Worry dwells in the upper left side of the intestines.

One of the easier ways to clear any of these emotions is by massaging the navel area. To do so, you can follow these steps:

• Lie on your back.

• Use one finger of either hand to apply a little pressure around the navel. The other hand can anchor this area. Do not massage the actual navel; instead, move around to find a tender spot.

• Massage any lumps or nodes with the tip of your finger, circling on and around the spot until it dissipates.

• You can also use minimal pressure to hold, release, and repeat until the lump dissipates.[19]

Reflexology and the Chakras

Many Asian healing systems incorporate reflexology, the process of relieving tension and treating illness by working on reflex points on the feet, hands, ears, and head that are linked to other parts of the body. Illustration 66 and Illustration 67 show how to conduct easy chakra reflexology on your hands and feet. You can use the following exercise with these illlustrations.

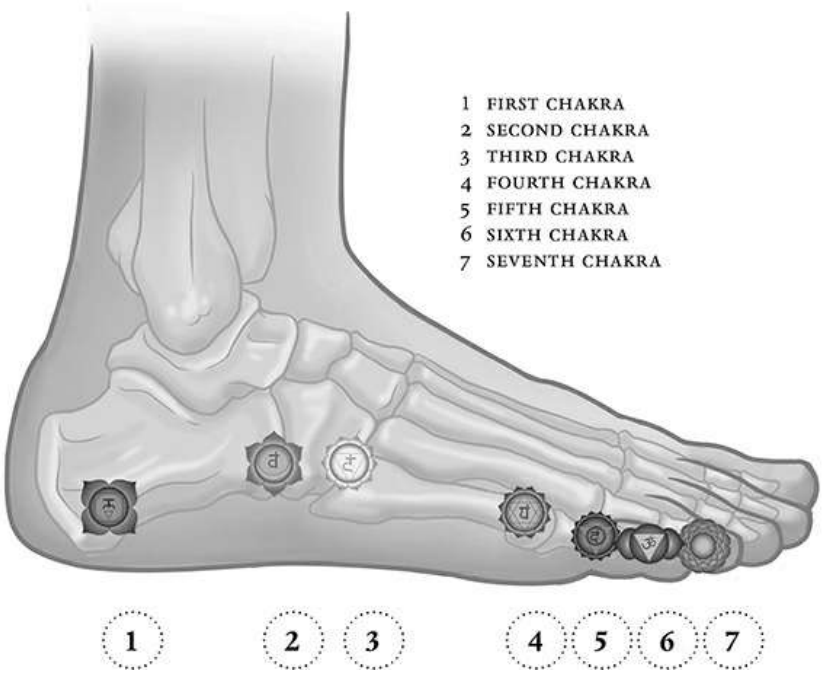

ILLUSTRATION 67—THE SEVEN CHAKRA POINTS ON THE FOOT: These reflexology points show the location of the seven chakras on the foot. For a thorough body, mind, and soul balancing, apply pressure to each of the chakra points. Start with the first chakra point and work your way up to the seventh chakra point. At each point, first ask your inner self to release all negative or unnecessary energies and then request an opening to supportive and nourishing energies. You can also work an individual point whenever you need. (See the insert for a color version of this illustration.) ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

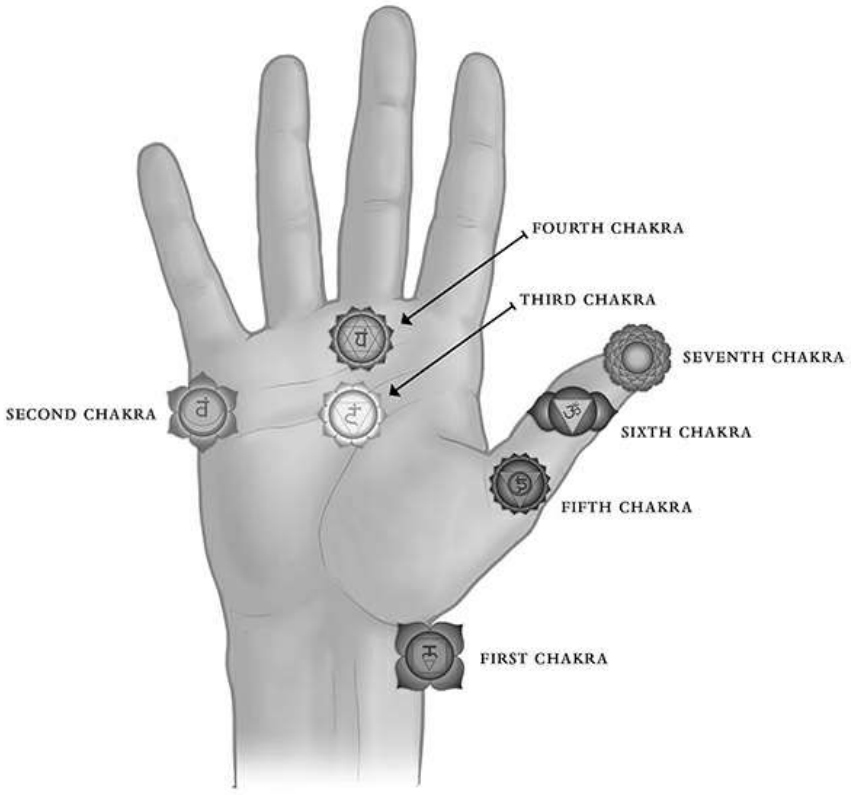

ILLUSTRATION 66—THE SEVEN CHAKRA POINTS IN THE HAND: These reflexology points indicate which chakras are located at which points in the hand. Spend a few minutes massaging each point, one at a time, starting with the first chakra and ending with the seventh chakra. As you focus on each point, first ask your inner self to release unnecessary energies and then open to needed energies. You can always work with specific points as needed. (See the insert for a color version of this illustration.) ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Chakra Hand and Feet Reflexology**

Once you've located the imbalanced chakra point, the simplest way to alleviate a chakra concern is to work the point as you would with

acupressure. For instance, focus on an issue you would like to address and then examine Illustration 66's seven chakra points in the hand. Consider which chakra is related to your symptoms. For instance, if you are experiencing exhaustion, you can work the first chakra point. If you are struggling with an emotional challenge, use the second chakra point.

You can take this approach with the hand or foot reflexology charts. As well, you can apply pressure to a point to release or add energy. As an example, return to the hand reflexology chart and manipulate the seventh chakra point. Concentrate on releasing built-up spiritual charges or negativity and pineal gland stress. Then focus on bringing in the consciousness of unity and pineal gland healing.

For all matters you can return to part 2 and review the Hindu chakras to pinpoint the best points to work on. Apply prolonged finger pressure directly on the point. You can gradually apply pressure and then hold steady for up to three minutes.[20]

Zen: Meditation Buddhism

Zen is a sect of Mahayana Buddhism that aims at enlightenment and whose main tool is intuition accessed through meditation. Although Mahayana Buddhism isn't normally associated with chakras, Zen has been interpreted via energetic angles, especially the hara line, which is covered in chapter 32.

Zen actually developed in China during the sixth century CE as Chan, a Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit word *dhyana*, which refers to a mind absorbed in meditation. "Zen" is the Japanese version of Chan. While Zen started in China, it spread south to Vietnam, through Korea, and into Japan and has basically remained thought of as "meditation Buddhism."

There are many versions of Zen, and most are now considered forms of Taoist Buddhism, with an emphasis on the transmission of *dharma,* or truth, from teacher to student. No matter the teacher—and many trace their lineage back to the buddhas before the historical Buddha—Zen is not an intellectual discipline. It asks us to study our mind and see into our own nature through a

process called *zazen*: meditation that allows us to know ourselves. Concentrating on our hara allows us to root our life in this center and associate with the original oneness. A simple exercise follows that allows us to experience this comforting energetic balance.[21]

EXERCISE: **Simple Zazen: Being One with Your Breath**

A simple piece of Zen truth is to "be one with your breath." This sage advice invites us to link with the hara point, which is near our navel, but given our busy minds and lifestyles, this is not so easy to do. This exercise, adapted from Zen teacher and author Dosho Port, might help you achieve the oneness that calms and relaxes.

Sit upright in a full or half-lotus position if that is comfortable or in a chair if not. Imagine your spine as the stem of a lotus inclining toward the sun, and sit as straight as possible. Let your head sit softly on your neck like the flower of a water lily, your eyes gazing downward at a 45-degree angle. Your mouth is gently closed and your tongue rests on the roof, just touching the upper front teeth.

Rest your left hand in your right palm, the thumb tips lightly touching. They are now in an elliptical shape that opens to boundlessness. Let your breath be natural, centered in the hara point about three finger-widths below your navel. Gently invite your wandering mind back to this point, and let yourself simply be.[22]

The Korean Chakra System

Decades ago, Ilchi Lee stood on a mountaintop in Korea. In his early thirties and Korean born, he was seeking answers to life's most vital questions. His questioning led to twenty-one days of grueling ascetic training in the Korean Shinsundo tradition, a spiritual path originating in Korean culture nine to ten thousand years ago. His *eureka* was this: his energy was cosmic energy and vice versa.

Ilchi Lee's training led him to develop Brain Education System Training (BEST), among other programs, based on his conclusion that the brain is the

center of change. One of his scriptural sources was the *Chun Bu Kyung*, the "scripture of heavenly code," an ancient eighty-one-character text from the Korean tradition, similar to a Buddhist sutra. It is basically a numerical representation of the laws of the cosmos, serving as an expression of mathematics, philosophy, and energetic studies. This text predates Buddhism, Confucianism, and even Taoism.

A Korean sage created this text to explain his own enlightenment experience. It was further interpreted by the Dahn-Guns, a peaceful society that embraced energy study, including knowledge of energy centers. This rendition is called the Samil Shingo, which provides details for the Shinsundo training of body, mind, spirit, and character.

According to this work, the universe is made up of heaven, earth, and then finally humans, all of which emanate from "the one." Heaven is the spiritual dimension of existence, earth is the material, and humans represent all forms of energy that vitalize life forms. We are composed of all three natures within ourselves.

Heaven, earth, and humanity are sheltered within four corners or directions and elementally by earth, wind, fire, and water, which form a field in which fire and water energy join to create harmonious order. Within the human body is an energy circulation system consisting of three internal energy centers and four external centers, as pictured in Illustration 68; these are called *dahnjons* in the Korean system. The three internal dahnjons enable humans to become physically healthy and then journey to enlightenment through a triple-stage process that involves a graduated development of each dahnjon.

We start with the lower internal dahnjon to strengthen our vital energy. The quality of the middle internal dahnjon enables a heart opening, and a fully awakened upper dahnjon leads to full awakening and integration of the trinity (heaven, earth, and humanness). Each of the three dahnjons produces its own energy capsule—a sort of energy bubble that provides protection; see Illustration 68.

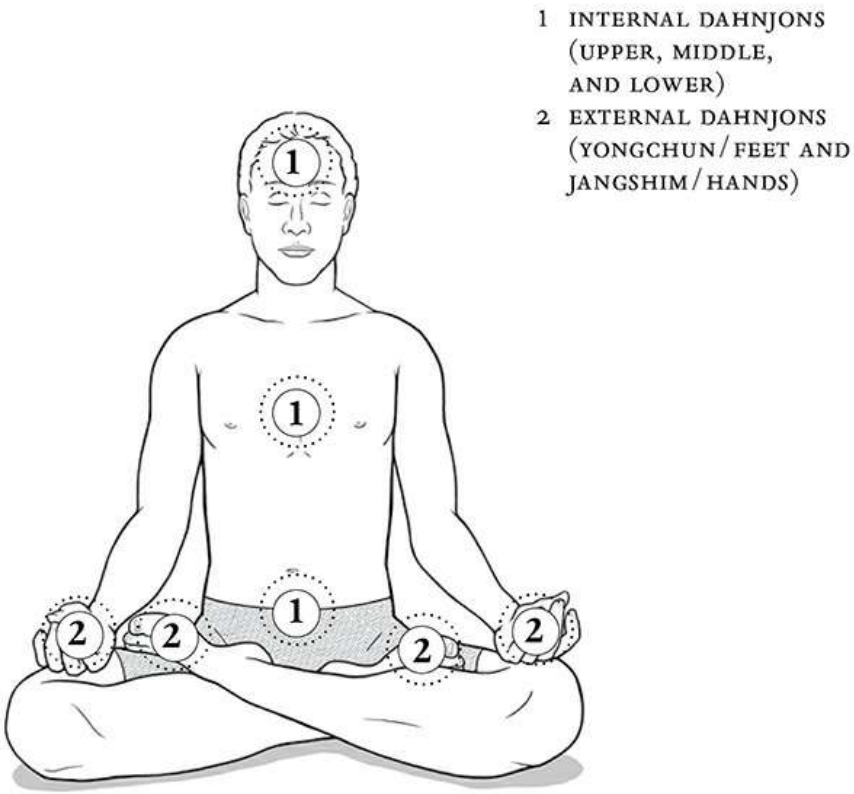

ILLUSTRATION 68—THE KOREAN DAHNJONS: The Korean system is composed of seven dahnjons, or basic energy centers, which are similar to but not the same as the chakras. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

These seven centers are similar to the chakras but not identical and are mentioned in the *Chun Bu Kyung*. Ideally, the five elements of chi—water, fire, earth, wood, and metal—flow through the circuit created by these chakric centers. This energy is now connected to the brain, completing the cycling of energy in the human body. The brain is central to this process because, according to Lee, it is composed of LifeParticles, kernels of ki (chi) that vibrate at infinitely varying frequencies. These particles are most easily passed from the universe and transferred from person to person through our MindScreen, a plane of creation that mirrors the Universal Mind and is affiliated with our brow chakra.[23] Yet another practitioner, Mooah-TJ, also works with the dahnjons and explains that they are fields or centers located in proximity to several acupressure points. They form a cooperative system that

controls the movement of chi through the meridians, called the *kyung-rak* in Korean.[24]

According to the Korean system there are seven chakras, and they are found in the traditional sites: root, sacrum, solar plexus, heart, throat, brow, and the top of the head, areas labeled with the Korean terms for these body parts.

First Chakra

The Jade Gate: Dark red in color, this chakra is the gateway through which we enter the world, announcing our arrival on earth. Here we experience our sense of self-preservation.

Body Part: Root (*Hwe-um*)

Second Chakra

The Earth Place: Red-orange, this chakra nurtures the physical body, providing us the firepower we need to negotiate the world with proactive confidence. Through it we anchor ourselves to the earth and the center of our own being.

Body Part: Sacrum (*Dahn-jon*)

Third Chakra

The Sun Lotus: Orange like the sun, this chakra meets our desires for love, eating, drinking, working, and living, and it encompasses our desire, creativity, and will. We use this chakra to fulfill our dreams and goals.

Body Part: Solar plexus (*Joong-wahn*)

Fourth Chakra

The Mind Palace: The seat of our soul, this bright golden lotus shimmers with love and compassion. It rules our overall health, which is dependent on the health of our thoughts and emotions. Through this chakra we move beyond our personal ego to connect with others.

Body Part: Heart (*Dahn-joong*)

Fifth Chakra

The Soul's Gate: Azure-green in hue, this chakra allows advancement of the soul. The bridge between the animal and divine energies of the human being, it allows expression.

Body Part: Throat (*Deon-dol*)

Sixth Chakra

Heaven's Palace: The source of the rhythm of life, this blue chakra awakens the divinity within, calling forth a second birth into a whole and everlasting existence. Through this chakra our spiritual and intuitive self links to heavenly wisdom and insight.

Body Part: Prefrontal lobe, third eye (*In-dang*)

Seventh Chakra

Great Heaven's Gate: This purple chakra is composed of a thousand lotus leaves, all of which enable harmony and integration of body, emotion, mind, and spirit.

Body Part: parietal lobe, crown (*Baek-hwe*)[25]

Of particular importance are the sixth and seventh chakras. The sixth chakra interacts with the brain stem, which controls basic life functions. The seventh chakra's *baek-hwe* point is located at the top of the head and serves as the point of interchange among one hundred acupressure points, also considered the intersection of one hundred meridians. It aligns us with universal or divine energy.[26] These points also enable us to create an energy capsule around our bodies. Different from our aura, the capsule is made consciously and is composed of a fundamental vibration of the universe. It actually protects the aura.[27]

EXERCISE: **Strengthening Your Chakras**

Ilchi Lee offers the following exercise, which uses the two top chakra points (the *in-dang* of the sixth chakra and the *baek-hwe* of the seventh chakra) to strengthen your chakras. I have provided my own version of his exercise.

> Shift your awareness to the *baek-hwe* point atop your head. Know that as your sixth chakra awakens, your seventh chakra will follow. Clear the energy lines from the sixth chakra, allowing energy to flow to the *baek-hwe* point. Now lightly press down on your crown. As you release the pressure, expand the seventh chakra sensations and feel the vibration radiating outward, from the *in-dang* to the *baek-hwe* and back again, until a vortex of energy is drawn into the *baek-hwe*, creating a solid column of energy connecting all your chakras.[28]

Thai Massage and Energy Lines

Thai massage is an ancient practice incorporating energy lines and chakras. The location of the Thai channels differs slightly from those outlined by shiatsu and Chinese therapists, although they are energetically and physically equivalent.

Thai massage therapists work with ten energy lines called *sen* but don't agree upon their locations. There are three types of lines: main, extension, and brain, which compare to the Hindu nadis and meridians in these ways:

Sen Sumana: Equivalent to the Hindu sushumna nadi and the Ren Mai and Du Mai TCM channels

Sen Ittha and Sen Pingkhala: Similar to the Hindu ida and pingala nadis and the Bladder Meridian in TCM

Sen Sahatsarangsi and Sen Thawari: When linked, they form the TCM Stomach Meridian

The seven major chakras are positioned along the Sen Sumana, and several minor chakras are peppered around the body. During a massage, practitioners use pressure points to work on the body. These aren't officially labeled; rather, they relate to the areas they affect.[29]

From Japan: Shiatsu

Auric fields, subtle bodies, meridians, chakras, and pressure points: many forms of shiatsu—a complementary therapy based on the principles of TCM

and further developed in Japan—incorporate these basics of chakra medicine.

The name *shiatsu* is made up of two words: *shi* means "finger" and *atsu* equals "pressure." This "finger pressure" is delivered via the fingers but also the thumbs, palms, feet, elbows, or knees to enable the proper flow of ki through the meridians.

One of the more traditional forms of shiatsu uses only the thumbs, palms, and fingers to gather information about a patient, such as general condition and specifics about the skin, organs, and body temperature. The basis of this diagnosis, as well as treatment, lies in examining *tsubo* points, vital points that frequently interface with traditional meridian points.

There are two main types of tsubo points: the basic shiatsu points (BSP) and the keiketsu shiatsu points (KSP). The BSPs are unnamed and effect change throughout the body; there are 660 such points. The KSPs, which also number in the hundreds, relate to specific concerns or imbalances and correspond to TCM points. Besides working with tsubo points, a shiatsu practitioner also refers to *dermatomes*, subsections of the body controlled by the dorsal roots, specific spinal nerves.[30]

Modern practitioners, including English shiatsu professional Oliver Cowmeadow, often take an energetic approach to shiatsu. He outlines an array of subtle bodies similar to those described by the Theosophists, including the etheric, astral, mental, and causal bodies, placing the meridian and organ systems in the etheric body and suggesting that the clairvoyant can perceive the auras of these subtle bodies. The seven chakras, located in the classical Indian areas and labeled accordingly, have an etheric component that nourishes the surrounding organs and glands. The astral aspect of the chakra nurtures the emotions, and the mental and causal aspects round out the functions of our consciousness.

The twelve main meridians are divided into six *zang* meridians, concerned with storing energy, and six *fu* organs, which transform food and drink into energy, also excreting waste products. Energy flows into the meridians from the chakras and organs of the body, and from the outside of the body into the meridian endings on the hands and feet. It also flows through the tsubos and

from meridian to meridian. By manipulating the tsubo points, we can affect all levels of our well-being.[31]

EXERCISE: **Quick Shiatsu Energy Boost**

Shiatsu has been blended with many forms of chakra medicine. Want to try a quick energy boost? Try this Zen shiatsu exercise:

Keeping your hands against your lower back, swivel your hips in a clockwise motion seven times. Then swivel in the opposite direction seven times.[32]

Sometimes energy medicine *can* be that easy!

Kubota Healing System: A Chakra Blend

I'm personally and professionally amazed by the complex and beautiful system of acupuncturist Naoki Kubota, which shows the interconnectivity of the chakras and meridians along with body zones.[33] Dr. Kubota has linked chakras with all major concepts associated with meridian-based therapies, including his own body zones. His system, captured visually in the Kubota's Subtle Energy Flow Chart in the color insert, reveals ways to increase both bodily and subtle energy. It is also the summative essence of integrating various philosophies and cultures, chakras primarily being Hindu in origin and the meridians stemming from Asia.

Master Choa Kok Sui's Pranic Healing

One of the adaptations of subtle energy healing is called pranic healing, a version of which was developed by Master Choa Kok Sui. The central component of Master Choa's system, which is essentially a form of energy medicine, is the application of prana, or the vital life force, for healing purposes.[34]

Said to represent the unification of science and spirituality, pranic healing draws on Indian tantra, Chinese Taoism, and Tibetan tantra, unified under the belief that prana can be transferred from one person to another. We can also

obtain prana from the air, sun, ground, and trees through prayer, meditation, and other practices.

Basically, a practitioner becomes a channel for prana and then, in turn, projects this prana into another's body or the area of that individual's life that needs energy. This process involves transmitting from a higher energy source to a lower energy level. The system employs knowledge of both meridians and chakras, and it requires that the individual touch the tongue to the palate, an activity emphasized in theories of the Microcosmic Orbit. This action connects the Conception and Governing Meridian channels, which disconnect at the mouth unless linked through the tongue. Maintaining this connection guarantees a higher flow of energy.[35]

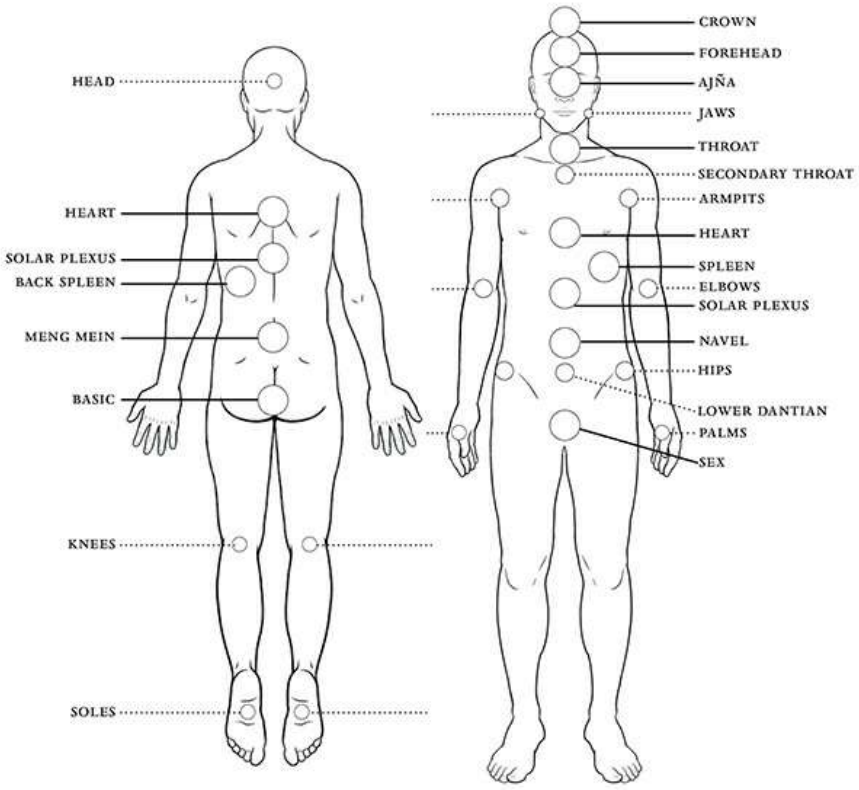

ILLUSTRATION 69—PRANIC HEALING AND THE ELEVEN MAJOR CHAKRAS: Master Choa's version of the chakras includes eleven chakras (indicated by larger circles and thick lines) and several minor ones (indicated by smaller circles and dotted lines).

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

The chakras are considered energetic transformers that enable the exchange of information. Illustration 69 showcases Master Choa's version of the chakra system, which includes eleven main chakras and several minor ones. The spleen, solar plexus, and heart chakras are shown with their front and back sides. His ideas about the major chakras are as follows:

Crown Chakra: Top of the head. Center for higher intuition and direct knowing.

Forehead Chakra: Center of the forehead. Center for lower intuitive intelligence accessed through inner vision.

Ajña Chakra: Between the eyebrows, the ajña is the center for the abstract mind, directing our will.

Throat Chakra: At the center of the throat, this center governs our lower mental faculty or concrete mind.

Heart Chakra: At the center of the chest, this is the center of the emotional heart.

Solar Plexus Chakra: At the hollow area between the ribs in the front and the opposite side, this center serves our positive and negative lower emotions.

Spleen Chakra (Two Chakras): At the left part of the abdomen—actually in the middle part of the left lower rib—there are two sides to this center. One lies in the front and the other in the back. These control and energize the spleen, sending air prana into the body.

Navel Chakra: On the navel, this center produces a synthetic golden chi that helps circulate prana within the meridians. In this case, chi describes a number of subtle energies, sometimes from the ground or air as well as that produced in the navel chakra.

Meng Mein Chakra: At the backside of the navel, this center controls and energizes the kidneys and adrenal glands.

Sex Chakra: At the pubic area, this is the center of sexual instinct and procreation.

Basic Chakra: At the coccyx, this center serves as the root chakra, governing our instinct for survival and producing energy for dynamic action.[36]

EXERCISE: **Clearing a Space with Crown Chakra Energy**

One of the techniques some pranic healers teach is aimed at clearing a house or workplace of negative energy using visualization. This particular process involves visualizing an electric violet beam of energy. This energy often appears as bright white with light violet at the edges. Emanating from your higher self, it is extraordinarily powerful. It enters at the crown; draw it in by focusing on your crown chakra. Allow this energy to move downward in your body and into the palms of your hands. You should not call on energy other than pranic energy while using this exercise. Send this energy into the room for at least five minutes or until you sense more subtle light in the area. Repeat as necessary.[37]

Which of the Asian traditions we've covered in this chapter fascinates you the most? You've looked at Asian systems of reflexology, acupoints, and more modern pranic healing. You've learned about the Chinese dantians, Taoist orbits, Zen hara line, Korean dahnjons, Thai energy lines, and Japanese shiatsu points, as well as the contemporary system of Dr. Kubota and pranic healing. Each, in its own way, incorporates chakras and the broad-based ideas involved in chakra medicine. Always, we start with—and return—to chakras.

I invite you to honor the Asian traditions in your heart as you leave that continent to visit others. Prepare now to traipse through the fascinating systems and traditions of Africa, Old Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas.

[contents]

Part 7

Ancient Chakra Systems Across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas

> Hearken with your ears to the best counsels: gaze at the beams of fire and contemplate with your best judgment.
>
> Gathas, Yasna 30.2,
> Dinshaw Irani translation

We tend to think of chakra lore as the sole province of India or perhaps Asia, but not only does this not stand up historically, it does not do full service to the beauty and wisdom of chakra medicine. In ancient times across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas, depictions of chakras and chakra-like bodies sprang up that underscore the elasticity and universal applicability of these "stars of light."

The concept of "as above, so below" that is present in so many spiritual approaches raises an interesting question: if the chakras are clear points of light within the human form, what is their origin in the heavens?

We don't have an answer for this, and that's actually not the point of asking the question. Rather, I want to emphasize the idea that the same knowledge that shimmered over the Indus and Asian basins also beamed down upon other regions of the world. Another way to say this is that the Divine that smiled upon one population smiled upon all, so it is not surprising that

cultures the world over have experienced divine energy within their physical form and created their own ways to understand, describe, and honor it.

We begin our survey in chapter 26, "The African Continent," a vast expanse of space that allows us to excavate many different cultures. Included in our sojourn is Egypt, lying at the northern edge of Africa, where we delve into ancient theories about the knowledge of the cosmos, divinity, the soul, and the Tree of Life that echo our classical chakra explorations. We then plunge into the chakra-like ideas of the Zulu—which eerily mirror our modern Western occult sytems—and the deeply mystical Yoruba system.

As we move north into chapter 27's "Chakra Systems of Old Europe," we find rich and diverse cultures in the European continent, as well as a variety of chakra medicine systems. After touching down in the Scandinavias and the Teutonic worlds, we move south a notch into the British Islands. In chapter 28, "The Middle East," we part the veil to highlight some of the oldest religions in the world, including Zoroastriansim, Islamic Sufism, and the Jewish Kabbalah, an ancient spiritual study.

One of the reasons it's so important to examine the chakra medicine concepts and practices of all of these areas is that people from Africa, Europe, and the Near and Far East have all populated India, the traditional land of the chakras. The Australoid group arrived in India from Africa in about 60,000 BCE, carrying an animistic religion with them. The Dravidian and Mongolian peoples from the Near and Far East landed between 10,000 and 8000 BCE, and the Indo-European Caucasians slipped in between 6000 and 4000 BCE.[1] Diasporas, visitations, and migrations from Israel into Egypt, from Africa into Greece, from Asia into Egypt and Greece, from Rome into Europe, and from other cultures into yet other cultures occurred throughout ancient history. That there are ties between Greece, Egypt, and India has been well established; thus, our wheels of light have long been travelers.

For example, Plato and Pythagoras, along with other famous Greeks, traveled to Egypt and India for educational purposes, and in Plato's teachings we find some of the same knowledge that was captured in the Vedas.[2] The *Puranas* mentioned that at some point ancient Indian kings, fleeing danger,

reached Egypt and established a kingdom there. Other such kingly groups also settled in South America, Mesopotamia, Northern Europe, and even Atlantis, the lost continent Plato mentions in his writings. Linguistic similarities between Vedic civilizations and other cultures are evident even today. For instance, Siberian nomads and the North American Lakota Sioux both use the term *garuda* to describe their "thunderbird eagles."[3]

To finish tying the world together, we will visit the Americas in chapter 29, excavating North, Central, and South America for chakra riches. Our exploration will include the earth-based tribes of North America such as the Hopis and Cherokees, the Mesoamerican cultures such as the Mayans, and the complex societies of South America, including the Aztec and Incan civilizations. Chakra ideologies are present throughout the Western Hemisphere, and it's little wonder, given that the Americas have hosted immigrants from virtually everywhere else. But then again, there is the tantalizing possibility that the Americas were actually the birthplace of chakra knowledge carried over from an earlier age. In chapter 29 we'll explore this idea with a discussion of the legends of Lemuria and Atlantis, the so-called lost civilizations that were chronicled by many of yesterday's storytellers.

Whatever group first conceived of the eternal and immortal chakras, the exploration of these ideas in the cultures featured in this section will more fully display the reflections of the chakra, a true multifaceted gem.

[contents]

The African Continent

I WANT TO breathe in
the spiritual.

TINA TURNER

As we enter Africa, from the historical gold mine of Egyptian culture to the homelands of the Zulu, we find chakras themselves as well as philosophies that are indicative of chakra medicine; it is a continent rich in chakra medicine traditions. In fact, some experts wonder if Africa may have been the first source of chakra knowledge. At the least, as is clear throughout this book, the chakra system is intertwined among numerous cultures, including those found in Africa.

How did subtle energy philosophies and practices become established in Africa, including Egypt? One of the theories is that the Dravidians, who are linked to East India, the steppes of Russia, and chakra knowledge in most historical renderings, actually might have originated in Ethiopia. There were black Indians in ancient times, whom the Greeks and Egyptians called Ethiopians. One theory is that the eventual India Ethiopians emigrated from Africa to India, and later many returned to Africa. As part of this return movement, they helped develop Egyptian culture. At a later date, the Caucasion Aryan race also invaded India, resulting in a population mixing Indo-Aryan and black Dravidians. Yet another theory asserts that the original settlers of the Indus Valley emigrated to Ethiopia and then migrated to Egypt and back to the Indus Valley. However, even Herodotus, the ancient Greek father of history, asserted that many Egyptians are of African descent, an important discussion point in that we feature Egypt in this chapter. As an example supportive of this, many Hindu deities are depicted as black, and this may be because of this migration pattern. As well, there are hundreds of

similarities between predynastic Egyptian and African practices and ancient tantric beliefs. Many historians believe that, at the very least, the early Egyptians were greatly influenced by African beliefs, which in turn affected Greek, Jewish, and, later, Islamic and Christian philosophies in addition to Indian Hindu concepts.[1]

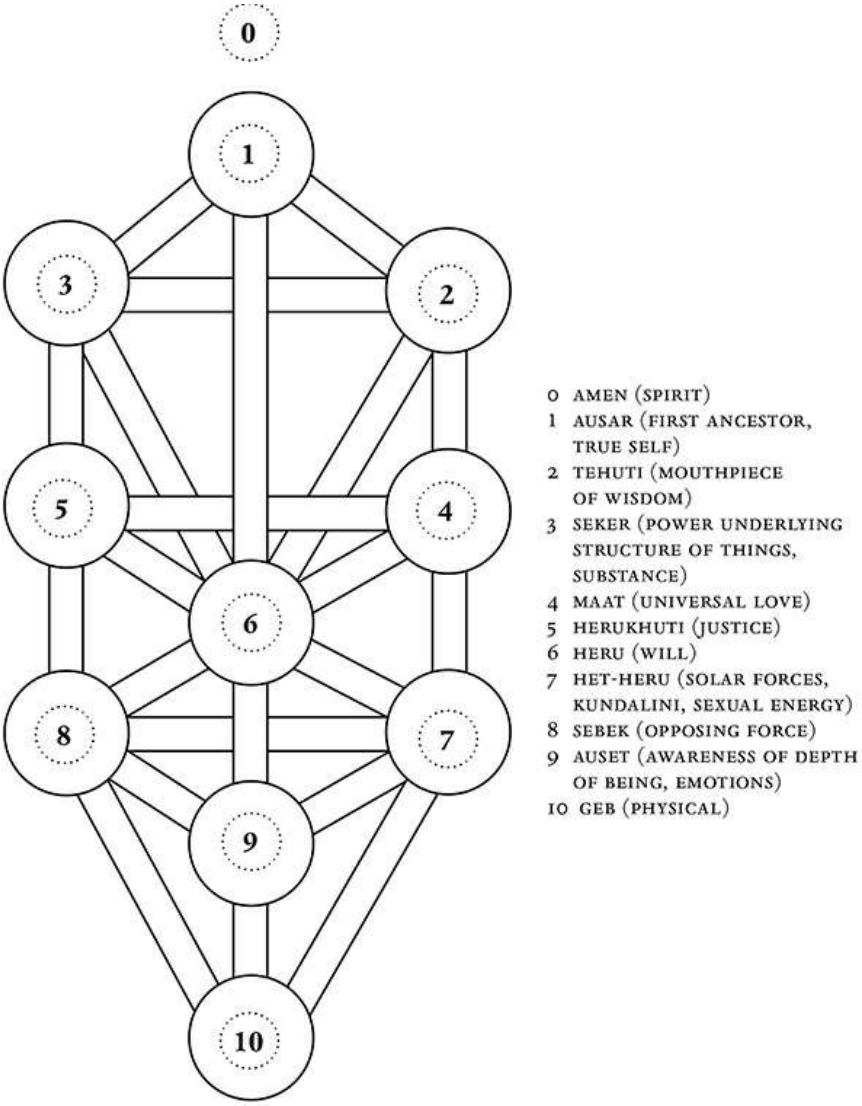

ILLUSTRATION 70—THE KAMITIC TREE OF LIFE: This shows the spheres relating to the creation of the world, each of which is a pathway from the heavens and also as a return from the earth. The section "Egyptian Energy Bodies" relays these locations within the spheres to the chakras. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Technically a part of the African continent, Egypt has always been a center of metaphysical principles and practices, and at one time was occupied by people with black skin. Called the Kamitans (also Kemetics and Khemetics), they are thought to be Africans who founded Kamit, or early Egypt, and might even have built the first pyramids. For context, their great kings were in power around 10,000 BCE. Most likely, the same people stretched across Asia and even into China, ruling until they were invaded by the Aryans and others. It is interesting that the Bible suggests that the Egyptians and Ethiopians are descendants of Noah's son Ham, creating even more circular connections between peoples.[2]

What we know with certainty is that these ancient Egyptians followed an orderly energy cosmology that carried into Kamitic spirituality and medicine and was also the basis of the spiritual practices of the African Zulus. The Yoruba people, located deeper within Africa, share a similar cosmology and as common an understanding of chakras as you can get: the presentation of energy bodies called *orishas*, or spirits that dwell within the body. All of these cultures incorporate concepts about energy bodies and principles in ways similar to the Hindu systems. As well, the Zulu and Kamitic systems profess a Tree of Life comparable to the Jewish Kabbalah. We can also locate Yoruba philosophies on the tree, as did the early Egyptians, who featured the Kamitic Tree of Life on the Egyptian Temple of Kom Ombo.

As you will read in chapter 28, the Kabbalah is the sacred science of the study of creation, developed by Jewish mystics. In the Bible, however, it is stated that Moses, a Hebrew, was knowledgeable about the wisdom and magic of Egypt and was actually an Egyptian priest. Eventually, as the Bible famously describes, Moses led his people out of Egypt, where they had spent the preceding four hundred years. This sequence of events suggests to me that the Jewish people might have acquired their knowledge from the Egyptians rather than creating it themselves. In fact, the earlier Egyptian system can be traced back at least to the reign of Pharaoh Khufu and the third dynasty in 3900 BCE. And from Egypt and Africa, the early Greeks, who set foot on

African soil between 900 and 300 BCE, might have spread the good word of chakra medicine to the West.[3]

In examining the African-based systems, I will start with the Kamitic Tree of Life before exploring various Egyptian approaches to the subtle energy system. I will next address the knowledge of the Zulu and Yoruba tribes. Finally I will depict, through discussion and Illustration 70, how all these approaches interface, furthering the suggestion that parts of Africa are a true source of unified chakra inspiration.

The Kamitic Tree of Life

The Kamitic Tree of Life is a diagram of the process through which God created the world, including humankind's journey through it. As Illustration 70 shows, there are eleven spheres, numbered from 0 to 10, each representing a different level of reality. Sphere 0, at the top and above the tree, corresponds to the state of God and creation before the inception of the concrete world. This aspect of God is known variously as Amen, Atum, Aten, Nu, or Nut. (There are other divine and energetic references in this illustration, which I will explain as this section unfolds.) This is the state of God in undifferentiated potential, a sort of primordial mist. The two dual principles within Amen are mind (subdivided into consciousness and will) and matter and energy. Basically God as Amen is still and doesn't vibrate. For creation to exist, however, there needs to be vibration. Mind is one of the principles that rules creation, and matter is the other. Ultimately we're invited to allow the mind to rule matter and bring both under the umbrella of spirit.

According to this system, God created the world in order to have experience. In that we are physical, we live in sphere 10, at the bottom of the tree, the end result of creation. Spheres 1 through 9 are the functional stages of creation and represent our spiritual nature. The downward path is the path of creation, and the upward path is our return to our initial state. The meanings of the spheres, labeled by number but also according to the related Kamitic deity, are as follows:

The Meanings of the Spheres

Sphere 0: Amen, among other names; God; the hidden god.

Sphere 1: Ausar (masculine); God manifest in the world.

Sphere 2: Tehuti or Djehuti (masculine); omniscience of God.

Sphere 3: Seker (masculine); words of power; power of creation.

Sphere 4: Maat (feminine); divine law, truth, harmony.

Sphere 5: Herukhuti (masculine); enforcement of divine law.

Sphere 6: Heru (masculine); human will.

Sphere 7: Het-Heru (feminine); joy, imagination, libido, beauty.

Sphere 8: Sebek (masculine); logic, intellect, belief, communication.

Sphere 9: Auset (feminine); soul, memory, learning, receptivity, devotion, nurturing; everything that composes our personality.

Sphere 10: Geb (masculine); body, flesh, animal senses, motion, emotion.

You will find correlations between the spheres and the seven traditional Hindu chakras a little further along.

Early Egyptian Energetics

Egyptian culture possesses an incredible wealth of concepts analogous to the chakras. Because of this, several esoterics have formulated chakra-like systems from Egyptian ideas—and linked Egyptian philosophies to early Dravidian or Sumerian ones. For instance, one type of energy body that is described in *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, stemming from the *Pyramid Texts* of the third millennium BCE, manifests activities similar to what chakras do. This energy body is called *ka*.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the ka was a shadow figure or spiritual double of a living person, alive inside the body. Its meaning could be related to the Sumerian word *kar*, "to bind," as well as to the Proto-Dravidian word *kar*, which means "knot" and "to whirl, spin, turn around." Hence we see one

of the similarities between the ka and the chakra, which serves as a binding, looks like a knot, and whirls.[4]

Another similarity between chakra philosophy and Egyptian cosmology is that both embrace life energy. In Hinduism this energy is kundalini and prana; in Egypt *sekhem* serves as the life energy running through the channels of the body, which can be harmonized through breathwork.[5] Ka is similar to a chakra, sekhem to prana or kundalini, the channels of the body to the nadis, and breathwork is a tantric, Vedic, and yogic concept.

Whether sekhem correlates to prana or kundalini in the Hindu tradition, kundalini was present in the mythology of the Egyptians. Heka is the god of magic, including medicine, who activates the ka while holding two intertwined snakes. In fact, the word *heka* refers to the activation of the ka, the part of a person that possesses great power and energy.[6]

The ancient Egyptian school of alchemy also employed concepts similar to those found in chakraology. Hermetic thought most likely originated in Egypt, with an early text commenced around 200 CE revealing that humans are the meeting ground of spirit and matter.[7] In the Hermetic tradition, spiritual activation is symbolized by the caduceus, the winged staff entwined by two serpents. As we explored in chapter 2, the staff represents the spine (sushumna); the snake, kundalini; and the wings, the sixth or seventh chakra.[8]

A few of the systems that propose chakra connections to Egyptian principles follow.

Egyptian Energy Bodies

The ancient Egyptians embraced several different energy bodies and aspects of spirit. Though considered distinct, they nonetheless interacted with each other. After I present the most commonly referenced ones, I will reveal one of the chakra-based energy systems that is anchored in this knowledge.

The Energy Bodies

The Sahu: Our glorious spiritual body, the sahu transports our ka to the heavens after death.

Higher Ka: *Ka* translates as the "double" or "vital force." This is the higher self.

Lower Ka: The double animating principle.

The Khu (also called the Akh): The term equates with "transfigured spirit," the "shining one," or the "luminous one," and it represents our higher self, the form we take in the hereafter.

The Khaibit (also called Haidit and Shwt): This is our shadow or lower nature, ruled by the senses.

The Aufu: The physical body that incorporates everything above.

The Khab (also called Khat): This is the physical body without consciousness. It is referred to as the *ht* or *jrw*, the words equated with "form" or "appearance," while we are alive. At death, the body is called the *khat,* or "the corruptible."

Aspects Of Spirit

The Ba: Similar to the soul, the ba represents all our nonphysical qualities.

The Ab: The heart or seat of conscience and intellect.

The Shekem: Referencing our divine powers and life energy.

The Ren: Meaning "name," the ren allows us to manifest. To name something is to manifest it.

Note: the polar energies of the *ba* (pure spirit) and the *khab* (gross body) generate the dense energy body called the *khaibit*.

Now let's look at one example of how the seven classical Hindu chakras relate to several of the Egyptian bodies or aspects of spirit. Also described is the association between the Egyptian bodies (and correlated Hindu chakras) and the Kamitic Tree of Life. The spheres mentioned relate to the Tree of Life; use Illustration 70 as a model to look up where the spheres are. For instance, the lower half of sphere 10, or Geb, relates to the Khab and the first chakra.

First Chakra: The Khab
Relates the physical body and the lower half of sphere 10.

Second Chakra: The Khaibit
Our sensual nature and the upper half of sphere 10.

Third Chakra: The Sahu
A transporting spiritual body related to spheres 7, 8, and 9.

Fourth Chakra: The Ab
Mediates between the divine and the mundane and corresponds to spheres 4, 5, and 6.

Fifth Chakra: The Shekem
Highlights the voicing of creativity and power and relates to sphere 3.

Sixth Chakra: The Khu
As the oracular faculty of the Spirit, it relates to sphere 2.

Seventh Chakra: The Ba
Everything in the supernatural and divine realm; linked to sphere 1.[9]

The Seven Powers of Egypt

Sebai Muata Abhaya Ashby is the founder of the Sema Institute-Temple and an expert in ancient Africa and Egypt. Along with Karen Clarke-Ashby, who has expertise in several types of yoga, he presents the ancient Egyptian idea of seven vortexes of energy in the subtle spine. These vortexes are compared to the chakras, although they are called the Sephek Ba Ra, or the Seven Souls of Ra. These Souls of Ra can also be seen as seven universal powers.

Within this paradigm there are seven levels of creation with many sublevels in each, as well as a total of seven levels of consciousness. The task is to attune the seven individual energy centers with the seven powers of the universe through wisdom and virtue.

These seven powers are actually relayed in reverse: the power of the seventh chakra is the first power, and that of the first chakra is the seventh power.

This chakra-based system is as follows. Described is the portrayal of the chakra or level as well as the power's name and attributes.

First Chakra: Sefekht

Also known as Sheshat, this is the level upon which we project our body on the physical plane. Sefekht actually means "seven" and is the term for manifesting, allowing all "sevens" to form in material reality—sevenfold unity, seven colors of light, seven sounds of the scale, and so on.

Second Chakra: Tekh

This is where we use cosmic energy to create. Tekh is the power of absorption.

Third Chakra: Ab

Also called Ob, this is the center of power and will. Ab is the power of desiring.

Fourth Chakra: Kheper

Here we open to the possibility of a second and spiritual birth. Kheper is the principle of becoming and of transformations related to genesis. It opens us to the world of actualization.

Fifth Chakra: Sekhem

Also known as the center of *medu neter* or divine speech. Within this center we receive love and communicate our needs. Sekhem is a fire that can destroy joined elements at the same time it generates a new life.

Sixth Chakra: Mer

This, the Eye of Heru, relates to intuitive vision. It is interesting to note that the ancient word *mer* meant both "pyramid" and "the right eye," which watches over creation. Mer is the power of attraction that brings dualities together.

Seventh Chakra: Ikh

Within this center our primary energies are unified into one whole. This power was regarded as secret but is basically created from the soul merging

with absolute reality.[10]

Zulu Energy Bodies

The Zulu people employ *sangomas* or traditional healers to perform a holistic form of healing, as do other traditions in southern Africa. Embedded in this form of healing are the belief that the ancestors continue to guide and assist the living, and the use of energy bodies that will echo in later Western systems.

Their techniques are many and include the use of a sacred healing hut in which the sangomas call upon the ancestors. Dancing, chanting, and the playing of drums can accompany psychic channeling, bone throwing, and dream interpretation. According to the Zulu tradition as described to Patrick Bowen, a Caucasian who was taught by the Zulus in the early 1900s, also embedded in this tradition is the knowledge of several energy bodies that relate to seven levels of Spirit. Following is Bowen's description of these energy bodies, the Zulu terminology for them, and the relationship between the energy body and the corresponding Theosophical level of reality.

- The physical body (*umzimba*)
- The etheric body (*isltunzi*); etheric counterpart to the physical body
- Lower mind (*amandhla*); holds life force and energy
- The animal mind (*utiwesilo*); passions, emotions, and instincts
- Human mind (*utiwomuntu*); consciousness, intellect, higher feelings
- Spiritual mind (*utiwetongo*); higher planes that create spiritual awareness
- The ray (*itongo*) or spark of universal spirit [11]

The Yoruba Chakra System

Peel back the layers of time and travel deep into the African continent, and you will meet the practitioners of the Yoruba religion, originally developed among the people of Nigeria and Benin. Yoruba religious principles also

apply to a medicine as comprehensive as ayurveda, with philosophies and systems that include the chakras.

The Yoruba people believe that before we are born we stand before God, who is called Olodumare, and decide our destiny. Who will we be? Whom will we meet? What will we do? How will we serve? These and other topics are mapped out—and then forgotten as soon as we are born. Fortunately we can reincarnate and keep working on our quest. While spiritual approaches including Buddhism and Hinduism negatively judge reincarnation as something one must undergo, this isn't so in the Yoruba religion, where it is considered a sort of second chance.

Olodumare is similar to Brahman of Hinduism, respected but not approached daily. Instead, humans turn to *orishas*, beings that intercede between the worlds of humanity and divinity. These are similar to Catholic saints, and many are extremely human in their characteristics. Overall, despite their mixed traits, they are considered helpful and might inhabit the bodies of their worshippers, who often invoke them during dance and other rituals. The counterbalance is negative forces called the *ajogun*, which can cause everything from accidents to depression. It is often necessary to free oneself of the ajogun to attain health and well-being.

As do so many cultures, the Yoruba believe in a universal energy, which they call *ashe*. This sacred life force has the power to cause change and is held within everything, from blood to lightning.[12] As you can see in Illustration 71, the Yoruba cosmology incorporates the basic principles present in so many other spiritual systems.

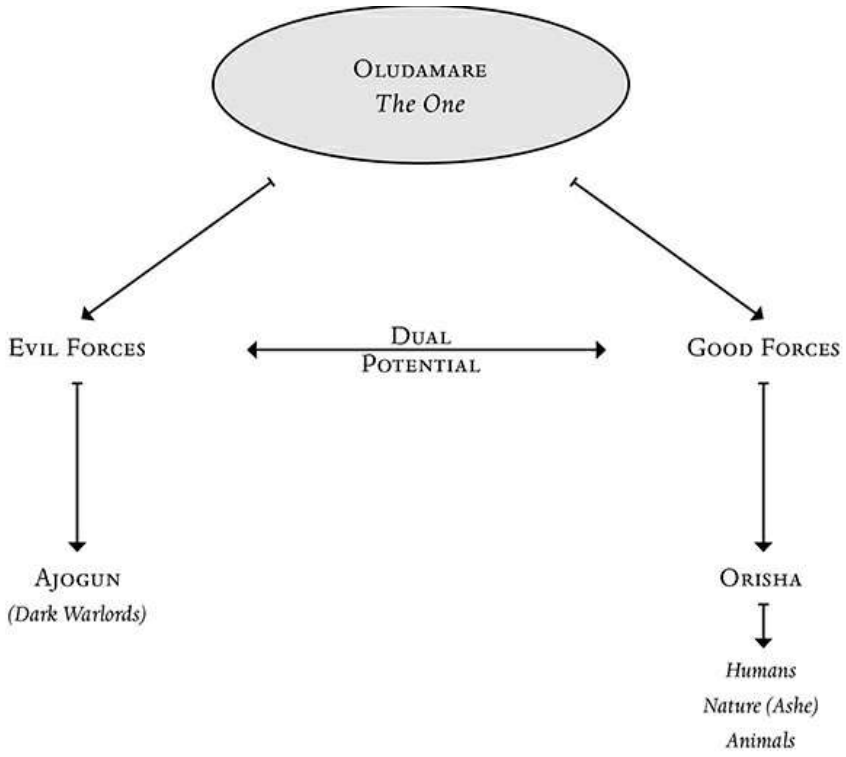

ILLUSTRATION 71—THE YORUBA COSMOLOGY: The Yoruba philosophy starts and ends with Oludumare, the single source of all. As humans, we have human form and are enlivened by ashe (the life force), affected by invisible beings called the orisha and the ajogun, and can choose between right and wrong. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Yoruba Medicine: The Art of Divination

Making use of chakras is part of the medicine of the Yoruba people, a healing system rooted in the *Ifa Corpus*, a religious text revealed to the mystic Orunmilla more than four thousand years ago. This system is still practiced widely on the African continent and in the Caribbean and South America, having traveled with the African slaves. But Yoruba medicine originates from traditions even older than the *Ifa Corpus*. Archeologists track it to the migration of the East African population across the trans-African route from the mid-Nile—or Egypt—to the mid-Niger between 2000 and 500 BCE.

This area had long been settled, perhaps from as long ago as 65,000 BCE, by people from many cultures, among them people who referred to themselves

as the Yoruba. One of the primary settlements of the Yoruba people was in Egypt, which, until the nineteenth dynasty of 1292 BCE, was ruled only by black individuals. Many called themselves Nubian, but there were also a significant number of "Yorubians" who had settled in Sudan, Nubia, and ancient Egypt. They were an ancient, cultured, and mystical people who brought their knowledge into these areas. However, their medicine and beliefs are also drenched in Egyptian philosophy, including the knowledge of herbs, divination, ritual, demonic release—and, most important, magic.[13]

The Egyptian and therefore Yoruba medical systems include the knowledge of two creative principles and four elements. The soul and body are not considered distinct; rather, we are one being in two aspects. There was also an understanding of pathological toxins and the importance of the brain, spinal cord, and central nervous system, in addition to other bodily systems. The ancient Egyptians even used light therapeutically, such as to bleach the skin.

The primary orishas were considered angelic beings that also emanated into the physical body. The seven major orishas were each to be internalized in a specific area of the body, thus opening the body to the One, or Olodumare, and the free flow of ashe. Another goal was to free a person from any ajoguns locked in the body. This activity could be accomplished through the use of herbs, foods, dances, and the like, often specific to the orisha and bodily area. And, as you can see in Illustration 72, each of the orisha areas relates to one of the standard Hindu chakras.

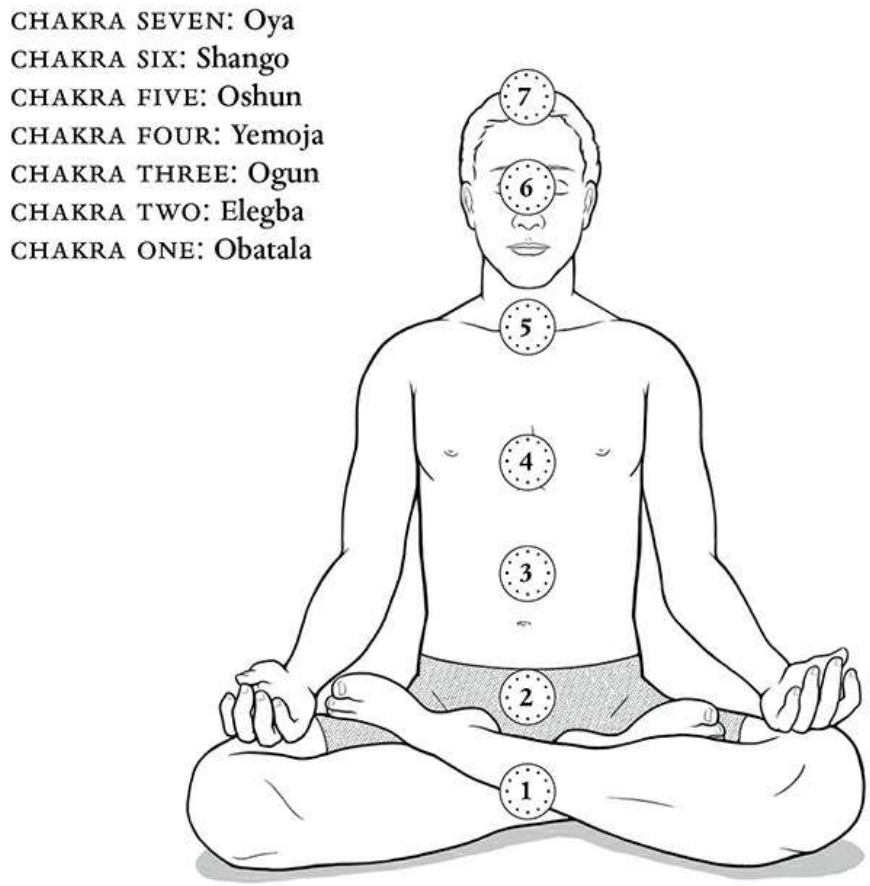

ILLUSTRATION 72—THE YORUBA CHAKRA SYSTEM: The chakra locations are inhabited by the orishas, beings emanating from the Oludamare that assist us with higher consciousness and enable healing. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Following is a description of the various orishas, with each orisha's name paired with a chakra. Included are the attributes afforded each orisha, its physical correspondences, and a number of beneficial herbs for Yoruba chakra medicine.

Obatala Orisha: First Chakra

Obatala is a creature of human form. White with purity, he cures illness and deformities. This orisha manages the brain, bones, and white fluids of the body. Related herbs include skullcap, sage, hyssop, white willow, and valerian.

Elegba Orisha: Second Chakra

The messenger of the orishas, Elegba holds ashe for his brethren and negotiates between the negative and positive forces in the body. This orisha governs the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Elegba works with all herbs.

Ogun Orisha: Third Chakra

The ruler of iron, Ogun clears paths, specifically in relation to blockages in the body. Ogun runs the heart, kidney, adrenal glands, tendons, and sinews, and he uses eucalyptus, alfalfa, hawthorn, parsley, and garlic.

Yemoja Orisha: Fourth Chakra

As the mother of waters, Yemoja represents sexuality and nurturing. She is the protective energy of the feminine. She manages the womb, liver, breasts, and buttocks. Specific herbs include kelp, cohosh, dandelion, aloe, yarrow, and the mints.

Oshun Orisha: Fifth Chakra

Oshun symbolizes clarity and feminine motion. With the power to heal with cool water, she assists with childbearing and fertility. Oshun is charged with the circulatory and elimination systems, digestive organs, and female pubic hair. She works with yellow dock, burdock, cinnamon, anise, raspberry, and chamomile.

Shango Orisha: Sixth Chakra

Kingly and virile, Shango represents the fire and lightning of a warrior. He can also transform base substances into valuable elements. Shango runs the male reproductive system, bone marrow, and ashe. He is linked with plantain, saw palmetto, hibiscus, and cayenne.

Oya Orisha: Seventh Chakra

The guardian of the cemetery, winds of change, and progression, Oya is usually found with Shango, who allows the old to die so they can initiate rebirth. The area served includes the lungs, bronchial passages, and mucous membranes. Oya manages mullein, comfrey, horehound, and chickweed.[14]

EXERCISE: **Clearing Your Orishas**

How might you participate in a Yoruba method for clearing your orishas? In this culture healings are conducted by a trained spiritual intercessor called a *babalawo* (meaning "father of secrets") for men or an *iyalawo* ("mother of secrets") for women. Healers use divination to assess what is occurring and then recite poems in order to help clear the malady.

A patient doesn't usually tell the healer about the ailment; rather, the healer assesses the circumstances based on divination and leaves the interpretation of the poems to the patient. Most typically, the healer reads the situation by examining the patient's *ori*, the spiritual center of one of the two souls composing all humans. The ori is associated with destiny. The other soul, the *emi*, is linked with the breath.

The process is often aimed at clearing an orisha and dissipating the negative energies, which are sometimes represented by an ajogun. Accomplishing this involves addressing the cause of the disease, whether physical, mental, or spiritual. To do less is to invite the problem to return. A complete recovery would also include a change of consciousness.

How can you safely employ a bit of this ancient knowledge for yourself? Start by closing your eyes and breathing deeply before selecting a specific challenge. Ask the Divine to appoint you a babalawo (if you are male) or an iyalawo (if you are female), acknowledging that this invisible helper is here only for your higher good.

Ask that this healer assess your ori, the spiritual soul of your being, next revealing which orisha is most affected by the causes of your situation. What natural law has been broken? What is this ailment trying to show or teach you? When you feel ready to shift your consciousness, ask the healer to help you remember, write, find, or run across a poem at some point in the next couple of days, a poem that will both reveal your issue to you and reflect the necessary and

transformational truth. Thank this being and the Divine for this personalized help, and return to your day.

During our explorations in Africa we found chakra-like energy bodies in an African version—the Tree of Life, an image conveying the story of creation—and an array of Egyptian energy bodies. We also discovered systems grounded in the ancient tribal traditions of the mystical Zulu and Yoruba. These deeply supernatural cultures created perceptions of subtle energy, various levels of reality, and energy bodies that mirror something held deep within all human souls and minds. On this, the African continent, possibly the first dwelling place of humankind, human ingenuity composed depictions of our higher selves—the blueprint of our physical selves.

Now let's depart for Europe, ready to explore yet other chakra-like systems.

[contents]

Chakra Systems of Old Europe

BEHIND YOUR IMAGE, below your words,
above your thoughts, the silence of another
world waits.

JOHN O'DONOHUE

We now turn our attention to Europe, recognizing that the Europe of today is an amalgam of hundreds of different cultures across time; thus, we acknowledge that our discussion can only touch a few highlights. One of the more interesting questions about European chakra concepts is the question of the role Europeans played in the origination of the chakra system. Some think that the prevailing view of chakra knowledge arising in the East is merely a persistent myth—that, in fact, it first appeared in the West.

Theorists in this vein point to the spirituality of cave painters in the Magdalenian culture, one of the later cultures of the Upper Paleolithic in Western Europe, dating from around 17,000 to 12,000 BCE. The images in these caves are indicative of many chakra medicine concepts, which could have been carried eastward into the steppes of central Russia where the Aryans dwelled. The Aryans would then have adopted a Tree of Life–based spirituality, along with the chakra system, and brought it with them when they invaded the Indus Valley during the early second millennium BCE.[1]

Whether this is truly the way chakra lore traveled the globe in ancient times, in this chapter you will discover that early Europe certainly played a significant role in the development of chakra concepts. The mythology of Scandinavian and Teutonic cultures incorporated a cosmological view similar to others that rely on the Tree of Life and chakra-related understandings, their stoic contributions providing a backbone for contemporary thought. As well,

modern esoterics have analyzed Celtic beliefs to find find echoes of chakras lurking in their mystical knowledge.

It is in Greece, however, where we find clear indications of chakras bearing similarities to Hindu concepts. The sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi, for example, featured an omphalos: a large oval-shaped stone they called the "center of the world." It exactly resembles an Indian lingam: a stone with a serpent coiled around it and leaves scattered upon it, as is depicted and described in chapter 16's Illustration 42.[2]

Greece reflects dozens of other chakra-like ideas as well, as it was a true mixing ground of dozens of cultures; therefore, it is little wonder that chakra concepts are embedded within its philosophies. Greek ideas are extremely important even today in the West, and this is why I include several "history lessons" in our discussion, analyzing the links between Greece and other sources of ideas that appear in Western occult chakra medicine. We bring along this same lens of analysis as we swing over into the world of Eastern orthodoxy. Here we discover Hesychasm, a Christian practice that includes many chakra medicine processes. And we also find chakras in the last book of the Christian Bible, shining like lamps unto the world.

As you review the material in this chapter, turn your antennae on. Much of our contemporary chakra knowledge emanates from understandings we can trace to Europe.

Scandinavian Chakras: The Vikings Go Esoteric

Did the Vikings have an understanding of chakras? Norse and Teutonic mythology speak of an evocative symbol, a world tree called Yggdrasil. The tree holds nine worlds and is graphically pictured much like a diagram of the chakras. Whether our wild Teutonic tribes created their own systems or stole this one from other lands while raiding for food, riches, and brides, Norse and German legends present their own deeply magical versions of chakras and kundalini, the stuff of ancient truths.

The Creation of the World

The Nordic and German races portray the earth as having formed from the slain body of Ymir, the first living creature, a giant who was fashioned in the void from various natural elements. He is comparable to Purusha, the cosmic man whose body, as the *Rig Veda* explains, was the source of the universe. Children sprang forth from Ymir, and three of them killed their father. From Ymir's slain body grew a vital gift to the universe—Yggdrasil, which bridges the void.

The largest tree ever to grow, Yggdrasil joins hands—or branches—with the other stories of a world tree. Within Yggdrasil lie the nine worlds, each of which can be described as a chakra. There are several portrayals of this relationship. Illustration 73 shows one system; another is offered in the section "Chakras and the Scandinavian World."

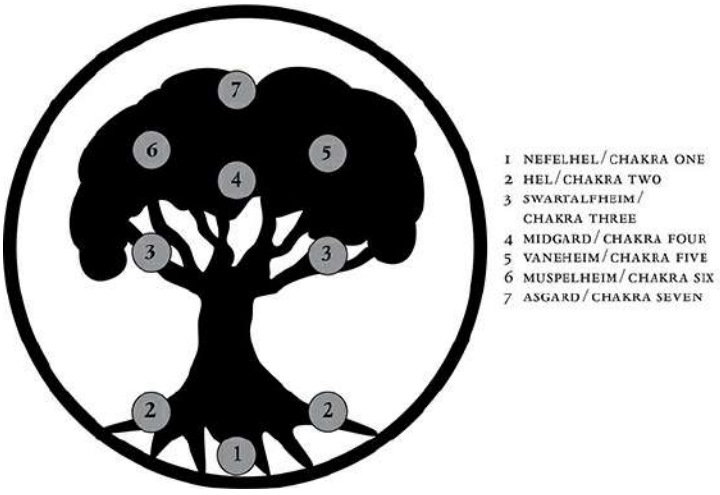

ILLUSTRATION 73—THE "CHAKRA" WORLDS OF THE NORSE: The nine worlds on the Norse world tree Yggdrasil are comparable to the chakras. They can also be organized into three levels of the soul: the unconscious, conscious, and higher conscious.

ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Chakras and the Scandinavian World

CHAKRA	CHAKRA DESCRIPTION	NORDIC WORLD	NORDIC WORLD DESCRIPTION
First	Coiled kundalini, survival	Nefelhel	A dragon; the unconcious
Second	Emotions and opposites	Jotunheim/Hel	

			Jotunheim is male and chaotic; Hel is feminine and half black and half white
Third	Information; transformation through willpower	Swartalfheim/ Lightalfheim	Lightalfheim represents thinking; Swartalfheim is transmutation of base materials
Fourth	Heart, our center	Midgard	The middle world
Fifth	Sound, communication	Vanaheim	Water; feelings
Sixth	Intuition	Muspelheim	Intuition
Seventh	Transcendence	Asgard	Highest plane; spirituality [3]

Chakras on the World Tree

Yggdrasil represents the spinal column as well as the eternal Tree of Life, an assertion emboldened by yet another Norse story. Around Hel, depicted on the lower right side of the tree, lies coiled the Nidhoegg serpent, which gnaws continually at the tree—just as the serpent kundalini impatiently gnashes until it can uncoil. The following is an alternative Norse-chakra system, based on different sources than the "Chakras and the Scandinavian World" chart above. I'm deliberately sharing another possible system in order to emphasize one of the main points of this book: systems vary according to culture and creator. This means that we are invited to draw our own conclusions based on our individual needs and preferences.

This is one version of how seven of the tree's nine worlds relate to the seven classical Hindu chakras:

Swartalfheim: The root chakra, concerned with self-preservation and ego. Associated with the Norse black elves, who were known for their materialism.

Muspelheim: The second chakra, representing burning sensual passion, is a perfect match for Muspelheim, also called the Land of Fire.

Jotunheim: This third chakra world is the headquarters of giants who desire to displace the gods. Both the third chakra and this land share a common focus on power.

Midgard: This land of human beings correlates to the heart chakra. In both, the motivation is love.

Vanaheim: Similar to the fifth chakra, this world is the center for creativity and the dwelling place of Kvasir, the divine artificer.

Lightalfheim: This sixth chakra planet is the center of awareness, and in Norse tradition it is the dwelling place of the light elves, renowned for their foresight.

Asgard: Here is the home of the gods, which mirrors the seventh chakra site of spiritual connection.

What might the additional two Norse realms represent? We can answer that question by borrowing from certain Taoist and Buddhist constructs, both of which are known as revered and authentic chakra systems. Within this framework, Hel is the location of the kundalini serpent, Nidhoegg. Niflheim, the realm of ice and cold, could be a variant on the root chakra at Swartalfheim.

The bowtie on Yggdrasil is a rainbow bridge that connects Midgard, the human realm, and Asgard, the gods' abode. The seven colors of the rainbow sparkle in the Hindu chakra system, just as they do in the rainbow bridge that links our human to our divine selves.[4]

Celtic Chakras

While the Celts of Neolithic Britain left behind no diagrams of chakras, the chakras just might be imbedded in stories of the goddesses and lore about caers (castles) and cauldrons.

As one story goes, the Welsh name for Arianrhod of the Spinning Towers, one of the Celtic goddesses, means "silver" and "wheel." Arguably, Indo-European ancestors familiar with Sanskrit originated this name. In Sanskrit her name would be "arganto-rota," which also means "silver wheel."

Yet another goddess, Elen, asks the king to build her three caers as a bridal gift. Potentially these three towers symbolize three pairs of chakras:

Caer y n'Arfon: Possibly representing the first and seventh chakras, this castle looks across to other worlds, such as the place of the faeries. Spanning heaven and earth, it enables us to walk between worlds, as do the first and seventh chakras.

Caer Leon: The site of flowing waters, this caer stands for the third and fourth chakras. Built at the lowest crossing point of the sacred River Usk, the cycling of the waters enables our vocation or life path.

Caer Myrddin: A stronghold by the sea, this caer stores the wisdom of the ages, the knowledge of Merlin, thus invoking the brilliance of the fifth and sixth chakras.

Another clue to Celtic chakra knowledge is the consistent appearance of the spiral in Celtic legend, art, and building. According to expert and author Elen Sentier, the Celtic chakras travel a spiral path: from the heart center down through the third chakra, up to the fifth chakra, down to the second chakra, up into the crown, down to the first chakra, and finally to the brow. There, all the chakra energies meet in the manner represented by an image similar to the infinity sign—the duality of the Lady and the Lord (do you hear echoes of Shakti and Shiva?), the dark and the light, the feminine and the masculine.[5]

Greek Chakras

Paraphrased in my own words, following are a few thoughts of famous greats among the ancient Greeks. Do they not sound akin to those of the ancient Hindus?

- I have a chest full of thoughts that I have heard from others. (Socrates to Plato)
- The soul consists of vapor and winds. (Alcmaeon of Crotin, affiliated with Pythagoras)
- There is a ray that goes forth from the eyes and returns again, not only receiving light, but also what is breathed from objects. (Pythagoras)

- Sight is a fusion of rays, the light of our eyes flowing out to kindred air, the light from objects meeting it. (Plato)

Consider these with what is stated so succinctly in the Upanishads:

- The vital breath is all of these—speech, sight, hearing, and mind. All causes us to know all things. (*Chandogya Upanishad*, 5.1)[6]

These and thousands of other Greek writings reveal uncanny synchronicities between Greek and Hindu thinking, including common descriptions of the power in the diaphragm area, the heart as the emotional and spiritual center of the body, the intuitive way of knowing without seeing, and the presence of a wind or air that separates into other winds.

For example, Plato posited that there is an interior fire or light in the eye. This idea is derived from several of Plato's works, as researchers Eduard Zeller and Alfred Goodwin describe in their book *Plato and the Older Academy*.[7] When this light passes from the eye, it unites with a "kindred fire" that comes out of the "luminous bodies," transmitting motion through the entire body to the soul. A variety of colors are associated with these lights. Plato also asserts that sleep is derived from this interior fire.[8]

Various Greek authors present ideas that relate to the nadis as well. The sushumna appears in Greek thought in the description of the spine, which was called the *hiera surinx* or "holy tube." Like the sushumna, it is considered a channel for energy, doubling also as a symbol of the Tree of Life.[9]

Orphic poet Pindar of the fifth century BCE associated the spinal marrow with life or life-span. And the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who was influenced by Orphism, also held the doctrine that the spinal channel was surrounded with two "veins" and, in fact, was also connected with the testicles. These descriptions are quite similar to our Hindu-based knowledge of the three major nadis: the ida, pingala, and sushumna.

Yet another potential sighting of the nadis appears in a long fragment from Aristotle's writings, which speaks of two veins extending through the belly along the backbone, one to the left and one to the right, past the collarbones

and through the throat. Both of these veins are said to pass through the spinal marrow to the testicles.[10]

Analysis of the Greek explanations of consciousness and the soul hint strongly that the Greeks had developed a chakra-like understanding of energy, as have so many other cultures. Roman beliefs are quite similar, as the two cultures were tied together. Probably the best known of them are attributed to Plato. Many of his chakric allusions are recorded in the dialogue *Timaeus*.

In the fifth century BCE, Plato taught that the psyche or soul could be divided into three grades. These are often related to Vedic ideas about the chakras in the following ways and have been attributed to the chakras as follows:

Plato's Part of Soul	Part of Body	Possible Chakras
Epithymia (desire)	Stomach	First and second
Thymos (righteous anger)	Chest	Third, fourth, fifth
Nous or logos (mind)	Head	Sixth and seventh [11]

Based on the scholarship of R. B. Onians's work *The Origins of European Thought*[12] as well as Plato's book *Timaeus* written in 360 BCE,[13] author and Hellenic divination expert John Opsopaus also relates the parts of the soul according to Plato and other Greek writers, each found within a bodily area, to the Hindu chakras. Included in this description is mention of the Latin word for the area.

Seventh Chakra: Crown

Greek: Koruphe

Latin: Vertex

Meaning: Illumination. Plato asserted that humans stand upright because the brain connects the heavens and the soul. As early as the third century BCE, those in great power were shown with a nimbus or halo around their heads.

Sixth Chakra: Brain

Greek: Enkephalos

Latin: Cerebrum

Meaning: Intellect. Among the Greeks and Romans, the brain contains "genius," and to Homer and Plato this area is the immortal part of the soul.

Fifth Chakra: Neck

Greek: Trachelos

Latin: Collum

Meaning: Purification. Plato called this area the isthmus between the superior soul (in the head) and the mortal soul. This area allows the two to communicate while keeping the inferior soul from polluting the divine soul.

Fourth Chakra: Heart and Lungs

Greek: Phrenes

Latin: Cor

Meaning: Affection. Herein lies the higher part of the mortal soul. In Homer's times, this area was restricted to the conscious spirit, which expressed through thought and emotion. Later, the qualities of spirit, courage, and anger were added. Plato also described an area below the heart that corresponds to the diaphragm, associating it with spirit and desire. This region is most likely linked with the hrit chakra, described in chapter 7.

Third Chakra: Belly

Greek: Gaster

Latin: Abdomen

Meaning: Appetite. This is the lower part of the mortal soul and affiliated with nutrition and sexual desire.

Second Chakra: Gonads

Greek: Gonades

Latin: Genitalia

Meaning: Procreation. Here are the "marrows" that unite the soul and body to create life.

First Chakra: Sacrum

Greek: Hieron Osteon

Latin: Os Sacrum

Meaning: Basic life. The sacrum or holy bone is the base of the spine, able to generate life force.

The Greek Shoulders Upon Which We Stand

Greek philosophy, which greatly influenced the East during ancient times, continued to penetrate and affect Europe and America from the medieval period onward, supporting the Westernization of chakra-related philosophies. While we've briefly examined a few of the Greek philosophers and their beliefs in earlier chapters, it's important to concentrate on three great Greek thinkers. Their thoughts become interwoven with the movements discussed in this chapter.

One pair of shoulders upon which Western chakra philosophies stand is Hippocrates, known as the father of medicine. A Greek philosopher and writer born in 460 BCE, Hippocrates suggested that healing involved managing a spiritual essence called *vis medicatrix naturae*, which he considered to be a natural healing power. He maintained that one way this energy affects us is through a field of energy flowing from the hands. We find in

Hippocrates the same belief we've met in the East: there is an ever-present force—prana—that is spiritual or subtle in nature.

Pythagoras, a high priest who lived between 560 and 480 BCE, studied with teachers throughout the ancient world, including India, Egypt, Palestine, and Persia, and explored the Chaldean teachings. He eventually founded what is now called the Pythagorean mystery school.

Pythagoras, like Hippocrates as well as his Eastern counterparts, believed in a vital essence, which he called *pneuma*. This force moved throughout the cosmos and was considered a fire that created physical vitality and the immortal soul. According to Plato, however, there is only one universal soul that permeates all things, and this resembles light. (We find an echo of this in Part 5's exploration of a "zero-point field," an ethereal net of light that perpetuates all life.)

Pythagoras presented an early version of the subtle anatomy, describing three divisions or faces of the soul. One rendition of the faces is the sensitive, the irascible, and the intelligence.[14] This idea of a tripartite soul spread among the Pythagoreans and beyond to the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Plantists, and Orientalists. Eventually, these divisions came to be known by three names: ethereal, aerial, and terrestrial bodies. The ethereal body relates to the soul that lives in bliss in the stars. The aerial holds our memories of previous existences and can suffer for its sins. The terrestrial soul inhabits the earth and the physical body.[15]

Then there's Plato, whom we've been introduced to in earlier chapters. Living in the fourth century BCE, he has been oft quoted as a believer in chakra-like ideas. Plato's teachings were revived during the Renaissance and morphed in such a way as to influence many esoteric thinkers onward.

Basically, during the Renaissance, Plato's teachings became fused with Jewish mysticism, Arabic philosophy, Hindu

teachings, and all else in the Hermetic tradition, resulting in a new discipline called Neoplatonism. This philosophy, first "packaged" by author Marsilio Ficino, establishes the human soul as immortal and the center of the universe. With an emphasis on sexual love as a way of experiencing a spiritual bond,[16] Neoplatonism emerged as a form of Indian tantra, most specifically that found in Kashmir Shaivism. Through the Theosophical Society's tantric model of the chakras, merged with Neoplatonism among other movements, we perceive one of the most important birthings of the chakras into the West, a storyline continued in the next chapter.[17]

Traditions Related to Greek and Other Western Thought

Before we explore a couple of the chakra systems related to Christianity, it's important to bridge Greek and Middle Eastern thought with that appearing in various forms of the Christian world. This information will be fodder for our next chapter, which explores modern Western chakra systems, and it will show you how several traditions tie together.

Hermeticism is a collection of beliefs that center on acknowledging the way heavenly forces influence the physical world. The Hermetic tradition encompasses ideas that flowed from the East to the West as well as ideas from ancient Egypt and Greece. All Hermetic ideas embrace chakra-related philosophies—such as a belief in invisible energies, human consciousness, and the subtle anatomy—and have at their core the "mystery tradition," a set of practices that enable contact with the invisible universe inside and outside of us.

Mystery traditions such as those in early Egypt and Greece were primarily introduced to the West with the writings of Hermes Trismegistus, a Pagan prophet whose actual identity, and even time period, is hard to place—although by the sixteenth century he was revered in many places around the

world. A number of acclaimed works are attributed to him, including *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistu*s (a recent edition of which is authored by Dennis William Hauck[18]), which intertwines alchemy, astrology, and theurgy: the effects of the supernatural in human affairs, typically through interaction with the gods.[19]

No one really knows who wrote *The Emerald Tablet* or exactly when. Possible dates range from 3000 BCE to the end of the third century CE. Some scholars suggest that the knowledge contained in it actually goes back to foreigners who mysteriously visited Egypt about twelve thousand years ago, leaving behind a sort of spiritual technology. We do know, however, that the *Tablet* shows uncanny similarities to Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In fact, many of the concepts we've been linking to the chakras are contained within this work, such as the idea that direct knowledge of a higher reality can be attained through psychological discipline and meditative exercises. Hermeticism also employs the symbol of the ouroborus, the snake eating its own tail, which is related to kundalini and illustrates the phrase "as above, so below," similar in meaning to most tantric ideas.[20]

Hermetic traditions also assert that there is one Prime Creator, although within this oneness are dual aspects of creation (male and female). This is the backdrop that calls for humans to become self-realized, to merge our subtle and gross energies through the "gentle heat" of kundalini to create unity where there is division.[21]

The Hermetic tradition either spawned or is related to several movements, many of which emerged in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, incorporating chakra-related ideas. Some of these Hermetic systems even incorporate chakras themselves. Manly Hall, a Canadian-born author and mystic who lived between 1901 and 1990, offers a good understanding of the importance of the Hermetic tradition. According to Hall, author of *The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic, and Rosicrucian Symbolic Philosophy*, many movements following the ancient Greek and Egyptian eras have included the same "secret teachings."[22] (Much of Hall's information is attributed to Paracelsus, a Swiss physician and author

from the 1500s who weighs in heavily on Hermetic and other orders. He is featured in his own section in chapter 30.) Many of these movements incorporated the thoughts of the Essenes, a pious group of ascetics who embraced Hermetic viewpoints and, according to Hall, taught them to Jesus. These concepts include doctrines such as the immortality of the soul. Some also believe that Christ was educated in the ways of the East, studying in the same temple where Pythagoras, discussed in "The Greek Shoulders Upon Which We Stand" section, taught six centuries earlier.[23] Thus Christianity actually had Asian as well as Hermetic influences.

The mysteries of Persia, India, and Egypt, tied together by Hermetic influences, also made their way to Europe through the Rosicrucians and the Knights Templar.[24] The Rosicrucian movement is a philosophical secret society founded in late medieval Germany by Christian Rosenkreuz. Based on the esoteric truths of the ancient past, it presents ways to see through physical reality and into the spiritual realm. Drawing on the knowledge of alchemists and sages, this order influenced the arts, science, religion, and politics.[25] The Rosicrucian Order, still alive and well today, teaches its members how to access seven psychic centers, points in the body used to access the energies of the cosmic realm.[26]

Yet other mystical orders incorporating Hermetic ideas, according to Hall, include the Knights Templar and the Freemasons. Founded in 1118 CE during the Crusades, the brotherhood of the Knights Templar, which was supposedly entirely destroyed, acknowledged the chakra system, at least according to Rudolf Steiner, a famous philosopher you will meet in chapter 32. Steiner writes that the Knights Templar was exposed to mystical non-Christian beliefs in the Middle East and learned about the chakras there.[27]

The influential Hermetic association of Freemasons is a secret society that traces its birth back to medieval times, culling beliefs from the Greeks, Romans, and Rosicrucians as well as other Hermetic traditions.[28] A fraternal organization, Freemasonry currently boasts millions of members and employs the seven basic Hindu chakras, coaching its members in how to direct kundalini in the search for enlightenment. The Freemasons influenced major

chakra aficionados, including C. W. Leadbeater, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society.[29]

Another order that emerged from the Hermetic tradition is the Golden Dawn, originating in the late nineteenth century, its founders having been involved in Freemasonry or Rosicrucianism. The Golden Dawn, which still exists, combines theurgy, Neoplatonism (which is discussed in the section "The Greek Shoulders Upon Which We Stand"), and several other occult influences.[30] One of its orders in particular encompasses the chakras; we will further explore the Golden Dawn in chapter 30.[31]

Gnosticism is a philosophical path that emerged from the Middle East while the four Christian apostles were still living. It caused quite a stir in the early Christian church—in fact, it was considered heretical. First flourishing between 80 and 200 CE, Gnosticism differed from Christianity in that it preached salvation through direct experience rather than through God or Christ, presenting a view that has been compared to tantra; as does tantra, Gnosticism encourages the individual to reach beyond the illusion of duality to experience unity. Gnosticism also employs serpent imagery and a hierarchical system of powers, as tantra does. Potentially, Gnostic principles could be traced back to Judaic sects as well as the mystery cults of Greece and Persia.[32]

Gnosticism contributed greatly to Theosophy, along with other modern mystical traditions. In fact, Theosophy is often considered a modern version of Gnosticism in that both emphasize that our birthright is *sophia,* or wisdom.[33]

As you can see, non-Asian views of chakra medicine created widespread effects, anchored in the following two types of Christian chakra systems.

Hesychasm: Chakras in Eastern Orthodox Christianity

In some ways comparable to Hindu-based yogic traditions and Islamic Sufi traditions, Hesychasm, or Hesychia, is an Eastern Orthodox practice that

dwells on the interior realm of the spirit. This path unfolds in a way similar to that described in kundalini-based systems.

One of the main questions this path answers is based on an admonition Paul writes in the New Testament: "Glorify God in your body."[34] But how do we do this? The fourteenth-century Hesychia movement provides a Christian response to this desire, concentrating on psycho-somatic forms of prayer similar to those found in Eastern chakra-based systems.

As a spiritual path, it begins with directing one's entire focus to God. In chakra methodology this initiates a process of the kundalini ascending from the root to the crown. Hesychasm is similar except that the journey involves confronting our sin (*amartia*) to lead to repentance (*metanoia*). The unfolding awareness invites watchfulness of the present moment, or *nepsis*. At this point we evolve to *nous,* the use of the intuitive or mystical mind, and then into *theosis,* union with the Divine. This process has been compared to the chakra climb to enlightenment.

These teachings, which evolved from at least the early fourth century onward, are aligned with those of Patanjali, laying out devotional methods similar in both goal and practice. These include the use of single-word prayers with rhythmic breathing as well as the use of concentrated breathing. Longer prayers are often coordinated with rhythmic breathing as well, especially the Jesus Prayer: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." These techniques are similar to techniques employing mantras, pranayama, and meditation. Other practices include bodily postures for attaining attentiveness that are comparable to the asanas, and an emphasis on entering the heart for inner exploration.

One of the most apt comparisons to the chakra system involves focusing on parts of the body while repeating the Jesus Prayer. Mircea Eliade, a famous scholar, describes four of these areas in this way:

Cerebrofrontal Center: Between the brows

Buccolaryngeal Center: Place of common thought, intelligence, and the conversation of prayer

Pectoral Center: In the upper region of the heart, stabilizing thought and providing emotional coloring

Cardiac Center: In the upper part of the heart, near the left breast, providing "perfect attention"[35]

As a variant, the Jesus Prayer without the finals words ("a sinner") can be said while in a restful position with the chin pressed against the chest and eyes focused on the navel, which I compare to the second chakra. However, most practitioners focus on the heart, which is said to govern and reign over the entire body and soul.[36]

As we are reminded by Theophane the Monk, one of the great masters of Hesychasm, "Experience teaches one, not words." Thus can we use our bodies to better understand our spirit.[37]

Christian Chakras

Does Christianity contain a chakra path? According to author and former president of the Theosophical Society in Boston, Zachary F. Lansdowne, it does. As he sees it—and as other esoteric experts, including Paramahansa Yogananda, perceived it—the Revelation of St. John, the last book in the Bible, presents such a courseway.

Interpreting the book psychologically, Lansdowne asserts that it outlines the stages of the human spiritual journey, conveyed with symbols including various beasts, churches, stars, angels, places, books, and candlesticks, the latter symbol being comparable to the shining chakras. Several other components also signify the chakras, including the seven Asian churches that St. John is addressing through his revelation. Because the name of each church holds a specific meaning, Lansdowne is able to match each to a chakra.[38]

According to Lansdowne, and in accordance with Theosophical beliefs, there are four parts to the personality: the physical, vital (causal), emotional, and mental bodies. The causal is the heart of God and holds our most laudable thoughts. The soul operates as an intermediary between the streams of living energy that flow from God's heart to our physical selves. These

streams express as seven rays of color that are transformed by seven archangels during meditation. As we start to function consciously, we experience a kundalini awakening and the awakening of our chakric gifts.[39]

Lansdowne starts his chakra exploration with the sacral chakra, believing it is the first to be mastered on the spiritual journey. While he acknowledges that the first or base chakra lies underneath the second chakra, he also believes that it is dormant or asleep until we have developed our second through seventh chakras. At this point, the causal body sends energy downward through the spinal column, all the way into the first chakra. The seventh, fifth, and fourth chakras unite and now awaken the kundalini, which arises and acts sequentially on each of the seven chakras.[40]

Following are Lansdowne's ideas about the chakras based on the Revelation of St. John. Included in the descriptions are his ideas about the most vital activities of each chakra, the state of consciousness it represents, and the associated churches.

Second Chakra

The sacral chakra relates to the church of Ephesus, which means "desirable" or "appealing"; likewise, this chakra represents deep-seated personal desires and motives. After a time, we become disgusted with our base motives, and then this chakra enables us to cultivate higher ideals such as charity, love, and mercy. This chakra highlights the sensual state of consciousness.

Third Chakra

The solar plexus chakra is associated with the church of Smyrna, meaning "gall," "sorrow," and "bitterness." An appropriate relationship to this chakra allows us to observe the illusions of emotions with detachment, inviting insight through the crown chakra that brings freedom and right mindfulness. This chakra invokes the aesthetic state of consciousness.

Fourth Chakra

The heart chakra is affiliated with the church of Pergamos, meaning "elevated" and "closely knit." Through this chakra we can embrace the spiritual love that overcomes the falsity of separateness and know the body as

the temple for the soul. The fourth chakra calls forth the compassionate state of consciousness.

Fifth Chakra

The Thyatira church is a "white castle," and that's what this chakra is: a transformative space for purifying our motives and feelings so we can rely on higher truths. When this chakra is developed, we can be objective toward concrete thoughts. This chakra increases our creative state of consciousness.

Sixth Chakra

The name of the Sardis church means "precious stone" and "prince of joy." When our soul transforms the brow chakra, we understand the principles of wisdom and can access our intuition. We are also able to achieve the intuitive state of consciousness.

Seventh Chakra

Philadelphia, the name of the seventh chakra church, means "brotherly love." Here we become untainted by selfishness and realize that spiritual love is the key to self-observation. Hence we also attain the state of self-consciousness.

Base Chakra

Once we've attained the "crowning achievement" of the seventh chakra, we can shift from self-centeredness to spiritual will. We now achieve objective consciousness, with a resulting awareness of the truth about the world and our soul.[41] The name of the church is Laodicea, which means both "lukewarm" and "justice of the people." It is interesting that among Christian believers, it was thought that the church of the Philadelphians (seventh chakra) needed to be safe before the Laodiceans could rise.[42]

As we hopscotched across Europe, we uncovered a rich collection of traditions. Perhaps predecessors to the now well-known Vikings were already roaming the earth, borrowing mystical information well before 800 CE or so, or maybe they had uprooted and were replanting ideas from an earlier age because we find Scandinavian and Teutonic mythology featuring a version of

the worlds and planets surprisingly reminiscent of the chakras. In the British Isles we spied ideas similar to those found in India and in Greece. Finally, we examined Christian philosophies, specifically Hesychasm and a more modern esoteric system that embraces chakras.

Now it is time to head for the Middle East, where energetic philosophies and systems abound.

[contents]

The Middle East

IN REALITY, EVERY reality
is a veil over reality.

WASIF ALI WASIF

The Middle East has such a diverse religious history and storyline that we cannot even begin to consider its depths. We will, however, examine various branches of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity that bespeak chakra bodies and related concepts.

One of the greatest puzzles related to this region and the chakra-like concepts that emerge from it is the question of common roots between the Vedas and the Abrahamic religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. In fact, the origin of both Islam and Christianity is Judaism, so we can begin by narrowing the focus to Judaism.

Some students of the Vedas believe that Judaism and Hinduism share common origins, as different as many of their concepts are. Examples of the two traditions' divergent ideas abound: The Hindu religion is polytheistic, featuring a wealth of gods, symbols, and cosmic activity. The Abrahamic tradition testifies to a single god and rejects the luxury of abundant symbolism, which it considers idolatry. The Vedic belief sees God in all things; the Abrahamic would consider that heresy. There are connection points, however, that are interesting to ponder.

One core observation is that God is defined similarly in Judaic and Vedic philosophy. Both feature a Supreme Being who is the One—formless, infinite, and eternal. In Hinduism, even with its rich array of deities, one rises above the rest: Brahman, the absolute principle, who is without beginning or end. In the Hindu school of the Advaita Vedanta, for example, nothing truly

exists except Brahman. This is similar to the understanding among the three Abrahamic religions.

As well, both Vedic and Judaic doctrines are designed to help humans join with the Divine. In Hebrew the related phrase is *bittu ha yesh*, "nullification of what I have"; it is necessary to leave the self behind to cleave to the Creator. This idea is comparable to the Sanskrit idea of *moksha*, meaning "liberation," the dissolving of the self that leads to samadhi or nirvana: complete absorption in the cosmic consciousness.

Likewise, both religions emphasize ritualized recitation of sacred texts. The daily Jewish prayers, if done according to tradition, involve hours of chanting in a process similar to that recommended in Vedic scripture. And both religions employ meditation, song, and dance.[1]

Pointing to more specific similarities, Professor Madan Mohan Shukla asserts that Hebrews belong to a branch of the Vedic Aryans. In a paper published in 1979 at the Oriental Institute at Baroda, Dr. Samar Abbas of India reviewed Dr. Shukla's research, which was originally written in a paper called the "The Holy Bible—A Source Book of Ancient Indian History" and submitted to the All Indian Oriental Conference in 1976. Shukla's research is hard to obtain, and this book has featured several strands of thought about the origin of Vedic thoughts. Now we add the proposition that Hebraic beliefs might themselves, at least partially, come from a branch of the Vedic Aryans.

Shukla's case explored equivalent vocabulary structures and similar functions of the priesthood, and he demonstrated how biblical figures could have origins in Vedic characters and gods. Here is one example from his linguistic comparisons: the word *Adam* is derived from the Hebrew word *Adamah*, which means "the earth." The Vedic term *Adityam* is derived from *Aditi*, which also means "the earth." Ultimately, Shukla's research led him to conclude that the *Rig Veda* is essentially the "Veda of the Hebrews."[2] Others argue that there is a different connection to make—that, in fact, Hebrew traditions were absorbed from Egyptian culture, which in turn came directly from Vedic settlers. And indeed, the temple worship practiced in Egypt was comparable to Vedic temple worship, right down to the varieties of

meditations on the sun. There are astonishing similarities in the use of sacrifices, priestly duties and activities, and even temple decorations.

We shall discover that many elements of the Abrahamic world convey classical notions of the chakras, including the mystical Jewish Kabbalah system and constructs of various Christian sects. The ancient Islamic worlds add their own ideas. In fact, on our Middle Eastern tour I will start by introducing Zoroastrianism, one of the first monotheistic religions, which proposes a chakra-like system of "Holy Immortals" that resounds an age-old truth: God does not recognize the seeming distance between him and us. Chakras—or their mirrors—can reach from the farthest points in time and space into the deepest parts of the human body. I also showcase its extension, Zarathustrianism, and one view of its chakra teachings. These nine-thousand-year-old originally Persian teachings embrace chakra ideas and cosmic knowledge, as does the Islamic mystical practice of Sufism. What do so many of these traditions have in common? The chakra is one of the main stars.[3]

As you'll discover, the Islamic Sufi path reflects its own chakra bodies, called the *lata'f*, and the Jewish Kabbalah, an ancient and mystical reflection of creation, outlines energy bodies called *sephiroth*, which are similar in nature to the chakras—and to the African Tree of Life. And the path of kundalini energy climbing the spine is similar in thought and deed to any Tree of Life symbolism. All depictions reveal the ladder available to us all: that we may climb from the mundane earth to the pinnacles of divinity.

Zoroastrian Chakras: The Holy Immortals

Zoroastrianism was founded by Zarathustra, also called Zoroaster, who lived in the Iranian plateau region and has been known mainly through his *Yasna Haptanghaiti* and *Gathas hymns*. These writings are part of a larger collection of scripture called the Avesta, which references Zarathustra's teachings over hundreds of years. The *Gathas*—hymns devoted to the Zoroastrian faith—describe chakra-like *amesha spentas,* or divine emanations upon which the world was created.[4]

Zarathustra's language, Old Avestan, was spoken around the first half of the second millennium BCE.[5] While we don't know the exact time of his life, classical writers including Plutarch and Diogenes suggested that he lived prior to 6000 BCE. Other experts attempt to place his appearance in relationship to the era of Alexander, which might possibly situate him around 600 BCE. Still others testify that he lived between 1700 and 400 BCE. There are even those who insist that the original teachings are nine thousand years old. The religion he inspired was known as Zoroastrianism when it was the national faith of Persia, and was later called Zarathustrianism.

Whenever he walked the earth, we know that Zarathustra was trained to become a priest. Through his personal relationship with his god, he was gifted with spiritual visions that enabled him to spread the "good religion," forming a faith that traveled widely through Persia in the sixth century BCE. When Alexander the Great invaded the region in 330 BCE the "good religion" was suppressed, but it was revived again in 224 BCE. Eventually the Zoroastrians migrated to Pakistan and then to India in 651 CE. A dozen centuries after this, between about 1700 and 1850, the British translated many of the sacred scriptures, including the one called the Avesta, and the religion has since traveled to the West.[6]

According to one legend, Zarathustra walked into a river to perform a ritual of the contemporary pantheistic religion at about age thirty. (He was called Zarathustra the Spitamad because it is believed he was born into a priestly class of that name.) There he was struck with a vision of a white light and then introduced to a single supreme being. Zarathustra addressed this god as Ahura Mazda, *Ahura* meaning "the Lord Creator" and *Mazda* meaning "supremely wise." By proclaiming this single god, Zarathustra is sometimes described as the first prophet to bring about a monotheistic religion.

Said Zarathustra, even though there is only one god, our universe is based on a moral dualism. Representing the two sides are the *Spenta Mainyu*, or the progressive mentality, and the *Angra Mainyu*, the regressive mentality, or evil. We are to choose carefully before taking any action, as whatever we do leads us in one direction or the other.[7]

As he further explained, the world was created by six *amesha spentas*, divine emanations or aspects of the Creator that permeate everything and everyone. An analogy is to see the Divine as a cube and the *amesha spentas* as facets of the cube. Also called the holy immortals, the *amesha spentas* represent six spirits enabling us to fulfill our destiny in the physical world; the collective destiny is to remake the world. Deviation from these spirits can result in various degrees of evil and will ensuredly affect us after death, at which time our essence leaves our body and we either ascend to the house of songs, which is a realm of light, or fall into the realm of darkness and separation.[8]

One a micro level, the six emanations permeate our bodies and can be described as follows:

Asha: The spirit of truth and right that monitors the law

Vohu Mano: The spirit of the good mind that operates the universal blueprint

Khshatra: The spirit of holy sovereignty that enforces action and domination

Spenta Armaiti: The spirit of benevolent devotion and love, regulating love and faith

Haurvatat: The spirit of perfection and well-being in charge of perfection

Ameratat: The spirit of immortality that manages immortality and timelessness

As one passage of the Gashas states, each of these spirits interrelates with all others. A few of them are mentioned in the following excerpt:

> Such are, indeed, the Saviours of the Earth.
> They follow Duty's call, the call of Love;
> Mazda, they listen unto Vohu Mana;
> They do what Asha bids, and Thy commands;
> Surely, they are the Vanquishers of Hate.

—*Gathas*, Yasna 48:12, Taraporewala translation[9]

In comparison to the chakras, one particular system that has examined the emanations relates the basic *amesha spentas* to the chakras in this way:

- Asha equates to the first chakra. Our survival is dependent on the law that operates the universe; hence, this correlates to the root chakra.
- Vohu Mano equates to the second chakra. The universal plan or blueprint is our creative aspect, allowing us to fulfill the second chakra task of creating from benevolence.
- Khshatra equates to the third chakra. We must act from the plan and intentions to manifest our desires, using the power invested in the third chakra to alter our world.
- Spenta Armaiti equates to the fourth chakra. Within the fourth chakra lies our ability to love each other in human as well as divine ways.
- Haurvatat equates to the fifth chakra. The fifth chakra conveys our ability to perfect expression, as does the spirit of Haurvatat.
- Ameratat equates to the sixth chakra. While our physical self is limited, our soul is timeless and immortal. Our sixth chakra enables us to touch the hems of the heavens through our psychic energy.

In Zarathustrianism, making choices aligned with these six *amesha spentas* prompts us to become cosmically conscious beings, representations of the seventh chakra, which serves as a gateway to the Ahura Mazda; see Illustration 74.[10]

A more extensive Zarathustrianism chakra system is based on a writing called the *Vendidad* from the *Avesta*. This work describes vibrating energies, with special reference to light, sound, and magnetism, that run parallel to many teachings in the Upanishads.[11] This system features sixteen main chakras located in the aura, connected to the physical organs and the brain.

As expressed in works citing Zarathustra, there are sixteen chakras located in the auric field that receive the light force of *athre* from twenty-seven constellations; athre is the light force that comes from the stars, passes through the force field of our solar system, and is spread throughout the world. The first seven chakras could be said to manage the parts of the brain and body, as depicted. Overall, the chakras regulate these body parts. I have indicated the similarities to the classical seven Hindu chakras from my own point of view.

1. Crown of the head (seventh chakra)
2. Region above the cerebellum
3. Cerebrum
4. Between the eyes on the brow (sixth chakra)
5. Line joining the eyes
6. On the nose
7. Line joining the ears
8. Tongue
9. Throat (fifth chakra)
10. Heart (fourth chakra
11. Solar plexus (third chakra)
12. Navel (second chakra)
13. Sexual organs (first chakra)
14. Line joining thighs
15. Line joining knees
16. Line joining soles of the feet [12]

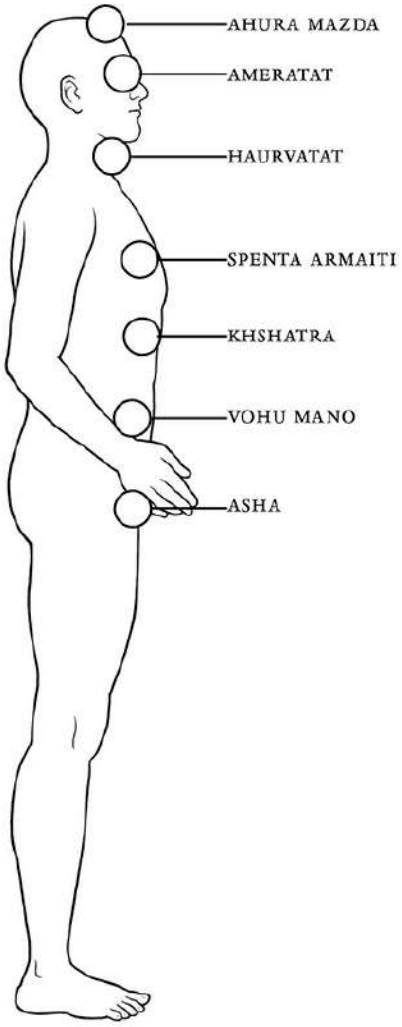

ILLUSTRATION 74—THE ZARATHUSTRIAN AMESHA SPENTAS: The *amesha spentas* are spirits emanating from God, the Ahura Mazda. Each corresponds to a different Hindu chakra site. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Entering the Fire Temple**

Zoroastrian places of worship are called "fire temples," with fire honoring the shining nature of Ahura Mazda. In ancient times continually lighting new fires would have been challenging; therefore, Zoroastrians created temples in which a fire was constantly tended by a fire keeper. The presence of seven fires was considered auspicious, and seven fire holes were evident at one of the temples: the Surakhani temple in Azerbaijan.[13]

Now you may enter the temple:

Imagine, if you choose, that you are approaching one of these ancient temples, and as you approach, about five hundred paces from the structure, you discover seven holes aglow with fire. As you pass by the first burning opening, imagine that it relates to the asha, or the first chakra. As the amesha spenta, or spirit of this center, activates within you and your first chakra, you sense its spirit filling you completely, putting you in touch with the loving laws of the Divine. As you pass the second flame, the spirit of your second chakra ignites, and you can acknowledge the full and complete blueprint of the universe and vohu mano—and the Divine's plan for you. In turn, each living flame activates yet another amesha spenta and chakra. You move to the khshatra, the third chakra, and overflow with personal power. Then, at the spenta armaiti and fourth chakra, you open to the genuine presence of love.

The fifth flame intensifies the haurvatat in your fifth chakra, inviting perfect expression before the sixth flame arouses your sixth chakra and the ameratat. Your psychic vision bursts forth, and you know yourself as limitless. Finally, the seventh fire opens your seventh chakra, and you now sense the fullness of Ahura Mazda alive within and around you.

You enter the temple aware of the holy light that you are.

Sufi Chakras: The Lata'f

Sufism, often called "the way of the heart" or the "path of love," is a mystic branch of Islam. As a religion, Islam arose in the seventh century CE, during the same time the early tantric texts were being disseminated. Its main scripture emphasizes that all of creation holds signs of Allah, the Divine or God, for people whose hearts are open. Muslims are also asked to invest fully in life rather than hide from it. There are several similarities between the tantric viewpoint and the Islamic belief in God being accessible, and even in certain of the rituals, although there is no proof that tantra influenced Islam.

However, Muslims use bodily postures for prayer and believe in the alchemical transmutation of matter, as do many tantric sects.[14]

Most Muslims would probably say that there are no chakra equivalents in Islam; however, in both Islam and Sufism, which are Arabic in origin, we find the terms *alam* and *latifa*. One of the names of Allah is *Al-Latif*, which means "the subtle one" or "the one who knows all subtleties."[15] Hence, *latifa* can be used to describe chakras. The main source of this chakra knowledge lies within the Sufi orders.

Sufi orders can be found in many Islamic groups, but Sufi members aren't always Muslim—there are many Sufi orders, each slightly different from the rest. I have participated in one of the healing orders of Sufism and found its approach both psychologically cleansing and spiritually fulfilling. I've also experienced the Sufi chakras, which afford us ways to awaken through spiritual practices. The ultimate goal of any of the Sufi orders is to enable closeness to Allah or God through teachers and practices rather than books, no matter one's religion.[16]

Toward this end, the Sufi chakras are a vital part of the spiritual process.

The Chakric Lata'f within the Sufi World (in the Kubrawiyya Lineage)

The Sufi system recognizes chakras or subtle bodies using the term *latifa* instead of chakra, the plural being *lata'f*. The Arabic word *latif* means "gentle, sensitive, or subtle."

To Sufis, the lata'f represent the nonmaterial part of us that can be awakened through spiritual practices. They are part of a subtle body called the *jism latif*, which reflects the inner nature of the Prophet Muhammad and distinct levels of the cosmos, described in "The Naqshbandi Sufi Cosmology" section. The idea of lata'f originated in the ninth century CE when esoterics noted them as a kind of generic subtle substance. They became more defined subtle entities associated with the body two centuries later.

The lata'f assumed greater form through the Kubrawiyya Sufi lineage found in Central Asia. During the thirteenth century CE the founder of this branch,

Najmuddin Kubra, depicted the human body according to three subtle fields: heart, spirit, and mystery. One of his disciples then created a fivefold structure by adding two other subtle fields—the intelligence and the arcanum—and the lata'f were born. A few years later yet another teacher, Alauddawla Simnani, extended the system to include the physical frame, called the *qalab*, and the super-arcanum, thus forming a sevenfold latifa system.

This system fits within a cosmological perspective in which humans contain the essence of the macrocosm in a combination of the four elements of earth, air, water, and fire. Isolated in worldly matters, we open to higher knowledge through the six major lata'f and the physical frame. These are organized in distinct categories associated with parts of the body. The names of the lata'f are the nafs, qalb, ruh, sirr, khafti, and akhfa. (The latter two are related to the *arcanum*, which means "mystery" or "secret," and upon adding the physical frame, the *qalab*, we get seven lata'f.)

The nafs represent our ego or most base elements, also associated with the most carnal parts of our soul, all packaged in a latifa. The nafs, along with our physical frame, are found in the world of creation. Above the throne are the five jewels or five "advanced" lata'f. Each latifa is associated with a meaning: the qalb is the heart; the ruh is the spirit; the sirr is the mystery; the khafti is the arcanum; and the akhfa is the super-arcanum. These five lata'f are perceived as lights that pervade the body and both receive and emanate divine energy. Together they compose the interior of a human being. It is important to note that the lata'f are not merely energy centers; they are subtle fields that spread beyond the body.

Simnani also established relationships between these seven lata'f and seven colors, seven spiritual types, seven ways of interpreting the Koran, and seven levels of the cosmos. Since then, these seven subtle centers are often described in ten parts, with the four elements and nafs (egoistic lata'f) in the world of creation and the five subtle centers in the world of divine command. The four elements are contained in the qalab (body). The colors and even locations of these lata'f vary widely, according to the Sufi system. One explanation for this is that the lata'f appear differently depending on one's

station or viewpoint.[17] To help you picture the relationship of the basic lata'f and the regions of the body, see Illustration 75.

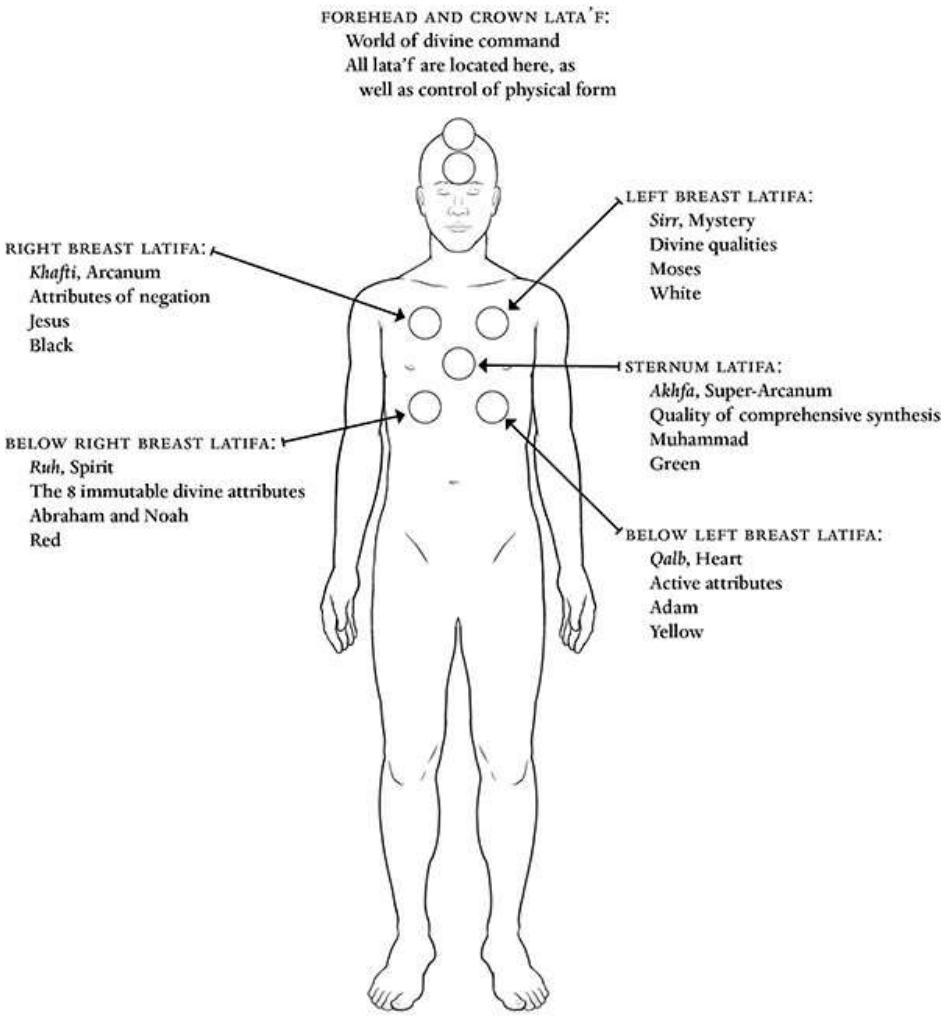

ILLUSTRATION 75—PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE LATAF'A: This figure depicts one way to place the lata'f on the physical body, according to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Mujaddidi correspondences (Mujaddidi is a Sufi order named after an eleventh-century teacher). Described are the location of the latifa, the name of the latifa, its origin, the related prophets, and the color, if applicable. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

The Naqshbandi Sufi Cosmology

The Naqshbandi is an order within Sunni Islam Sufism that can be traced back to Muhammad. All manifestations emanate from

the undifferentiated essence of God as the Absolute, who is a hidden treasure waiting to be known. God's breath formed a creation outside of himself, who yet dwells within the creation, although in secret. The primary manifestation of the Essence is the source of the energy for the super-arcanum, arcanum, mystery, and spirit lata'f. The bridge between the Absolute and the creation is the "quality of comprehensive synthesis." All divine energy flows through this portal into the cosmic order, with the super-arcanum latifa, associated with Muhammad, receiving direction from divine grace. This circle of the first manifestation includes the Muhammadan reality; the attributes of negation, which transmit divine energy to the arcanum latifa associated with Jesus; the essential qualities, which channel grace to the mystery latifa associated with Moses; and the eight immutable divine attributes, which deliver divine energy to the subtle center of the spirit associated with Abraham and Noah. All prophets, however, receive their energy through Muhammad.

The second manifestation contains God's names and attributes, as well as the active attributes, which direct divine energy to the heart latifa, related to Adam. In the third manifestation of divine command are shapes. These relate to the essence of corresponding attributes. This is also called the world of angels. Five lata'f are in this realm. In the lower range of this manifestation are additional forms or archetypes. The upper limit of this world contains the throne, below which are the nafs, elements, and natural world. The third and fourth manifestations are contained within a circle of contingent existence, an ever-renewing cycle of energy.[18] As complex as this cosmology is, it is beautiful—and it's easy to see how the chakra-like energies of the lata'f play a similar role to the classical Hindu chakras.

The Practice of Sufism

Key to Sufism is the use of rituals, including chanting, breathing, prayer, meditation, and more, to perform remembrance. The term *remembrance* recognizes that we were once (and are) one with Allah—whose name means "the One" in Arabic—but we have forgotten this connection. Another fundamental practice is to invoke one of ninety-nine known names of Allah, which relate to the qualities of God. By focusing on them we improve ourselves, work through our issues, and become more like God.

To enable this remembrance, we must mature three aspects of ourselves: the nafs, heart, and soul. As you may have noticed, defining the nafs is complicated. This is because they are simultaneously a representation of our ego and carnal soul and are a latifa. At their base level, the nafs lead to anger, lust, anxiety, boredom, depression, and self-pity, among other lower instincts. The nafs can evolve, however, to bring us peace and satisfaction—as can our heart and soul. In order to mature each of these three aspects of ourselves—the nafs (carnal soul), heart, and soul (spiritual self)—we must open to the qualities of Allah. We do this by "walking the stations," a seven-step map of spiritual growth that enables us to live in harmony with both the material world and God's reality. We walk these stations so that each of our three aspects may progress to enlightenment. (*Note:* different Sufi orders define these stations, and even the nafs, heart, and soul, in different ways. I have selected definitions that are easiest to explain for purposes of presenting an orderly system.)

Challenging us is "the voice," also called "the fire" or "the shaitan" (*ash-shaytan*), a dark force that pretends to be an advisor and friend while tricking us into indulging our nafs. Basically, the shaitan wants to turn us from the light and envelop us in darkness. I have personally experienced the shaitan getting through the cracks of my psyche by reinforcing self-defeating beliefs such as a sense of worthlessness or unlovability. Thus our inner transformation is a sort of "holy war," one conducted only within ourselves, not with other people.

I am featuring the seven stations of the nafs in this chapter because I believe they represent tremendous challenges in our culture today. They are as

follows:

Al-Amarra: Listening to the shaitan. On this level we hear the voice of the shaitan both within and outside us, and we need to refuse to believe it.

Al-Lawamma: The place of questioning. Now that we are open to standing strong in temptation, the inner nafs and the shaitan pose questions that make us question the path of righteousness. The shaitan will talk to our friends and relatives and make them question us—but we can't listen to doubts. The answer is to listen only to the voice of God.

Al-Amina: The station of faith and trust. Now the shaitan sits next to us and speaks in the language of God. It might tell us that too much praying is bad for us or that listening to God could rob us of friends. If we remain open in heart and mind to God, we will feel ourselves embraced by God.

Al-Mutma'inna: The site of security. This station is quiet because we have learned to listen only to God, thus stifling the nafs and the shaitan. We recognize that everything comes from God, and we begin to see the world through the eye of our heart.

Ar-Ridiyya: Disobeying the nafs. As we perceive the face of God in everything, we receive all we need from God and are sometimes led to weep because we have lost so much time in the darkness of the world. This enables further clearing of our nafs.

Al-Mardiyya: Accepting without asking. As we see through our heart, we begin to communicate in the language of the soul, knowing there is no difference between our body and soul. There is no shaitan here because love has conquered everything. We therefore start to open to "the secret," the inner heart of God.

Al-Kamilla: The perfection of the nafs. The nafs have now become purified, and we live only in the heart.

The stations of the heart begin with the need to return to God for cleansing, desiring only to wipe away our mistakes, and moves us to the secret place in the heart where we know we are completely loved. We now desire to give everything to God. The stations of the soul move the follower from remembering that we are here for love to recognizing the secret and holy garden within our heart, where there is only the One or Allah and the holiest of light.[19]

While we find within it echoes of more familiar chakra medicine, you can see that delving into the Sufi system can be complex—but it can also be simple. The easiest way to bond with God through the Sufi system is to conduct remembrance. You will find one way to do this outlined in the following exercise.

EXERCISE: **Remembrance with the Sufis**

The word *dhir* means "remembrance," a heart-centered Sufi approach to connecting with the Divine. This ancient practice can be done while focusing on any of the chakras. Following is a simple way to conduct remembrance using the name of God—Allah.

- Sit in a quiet place with your feet on the floor.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Place your focus about two inches below your collarbone, in your heart space.
- Now concentrate on the name of God, "Allah." This is the highest name of God. As you utter the "ah" sound, feel your heart open. With the "lah," the sound moves into your heart.
- Continue to recite God's name as many times as you desire, either aloud or silently, until you become filled with the sense of unity.
- Take a few deep breaths and allow yourself to slowly stand again.

The Hriday Chakra: Moving Deeper into the Heart

> The Naqshbandi Sufi order speaks much of the heart, using the term *hriday chakra* to describe this center of love. By activating and purifying this chakra, we can open and access all other chakras. In fact, it is said that the five subtle energy centers—the English word equivalents being heart, spirit, secret, hidden, and most hidden—are all located within the hriday chakra by the order of God. Each relates to a different element. Of these, we actually need only concentrate on the qalb or heart latifa. All is possible through love.[20]

The Jewish Kabbalah and Sephiroth

The Kabbalah is a mystical energetic system that involves the chakra-like centers—spheres of consciousness—the ancient Hebrews described. The Zohar, or Book of Splendor—the seminal text of the Kabbalah—is usually attributed to the second-century Talmudic master Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, although the origin of the system is also frequently placed in the twelfth century CE.

The mystery of the Kabbalah lies in its divine authorship, according to Jewish mystics, who believe the Kabbalah was given to the angels before God created the world, and that humans have received it three times through three different men. Adam was first granted the privilege through Archangel Raziel upon being expelled from the Garden of Eden. From the priest Melchizedek, around 1700 BCE Abraham was the second to receive the Kabbalah. The final revelation was granted to Moses on Mount Sinai as he received the Ten Commandments. The teachings were kept hidden and passed down from teacher to student until Moses de Leon, a fourteenth-century Spanish Kabbalist, presented the Zohar, claiming he had found these thousand-year-old scrolls.[21]

Though Jewish in ownership, the Kabbalah was likely assembled from dozens of cultures and across thousands of years. It has probably been touched and affected by ideas from Egyptian, Chaldean, Hermetic, and

African teachings, and it can be compared to Hindu and other chakra systems, as well as some Asian energy systems.[22]

You will run across many spellings for the term *Kabbalah*: Kabbalah, Quaballah, Qabalah, Kabalah, Cabala, Qabbala, and more. The meaning of the word comes from its root, *qibel*, meaning "to receive" or "receiving tradition." Thus do we open the door into an esoteric discipline describing the unchanging, concealed, and eternal Ein Sof (God; "no end") and the finite universe.[23]

Many Kabbalist schools exist. One I find particularly interesting because of its storytelling and its emphasis on hope is the Lurianic school, which presents the tale of the *shevirat hakelim,* or the "shattering of the vessels," as well as the *tikkun olum,* or the "repair of the world." The doctrine relates that God created two universes: this one and a previous one. The center of each is *orot,* or "lights," and *kelim,* or "vessels." Light represents God's creative energy; the vessels receive and direct this energy.

In the first universe the divine energy was too intense and the vessels shattered, imploding that universe. We, one of the many vessels, now inhabit a dimmer universe. Combined, all the vessels sustain the universe. However, the shattered vessels from the first universe sent sparks of the earlier light into the current one, and they are now embedded all around us. We are here to help repair this world by uncovering these holy sparks and releasing them back to the source. In the Jewish tradition one frees a spark through understanding the Torah and following the Jewish commandments and rituals.[24]

A phrase from Kabbalistic teachings poetically describes the creation of the world: "The flower buds have appeared on the earth"[25] —hence did the goodness of creation occur on our planet.

The Vital Energy Bodies: The Tree of the Sephiroth

The Kabbalah recognizes that we are each a micro version of the greater universe. All the forces in the universe are ours, but to access them we need

to know how. The Tree of Life, an image that is cross-cultural and timeless, shows us the way.

The Tree of Life was formed at creation and symbolizes the top-down creation of the universe; God or the Ein Sof is at the top but also present on every level. We started in nothingness, the Daath, and evolved through nine states of manifestation to end with a tenth, physical embodiment. Therefore, the tree is our descent into earthly learning as well as our ladder upward through the process of enlightenment.

Each stage is its own branch, and together they are called the ten holy sephiroth, or spheres of consciousness. There are twenty-two lines, or paths, linking these different sephiroth; these twenty-two paths of wisdom serve as gateways to spiritual attunement.

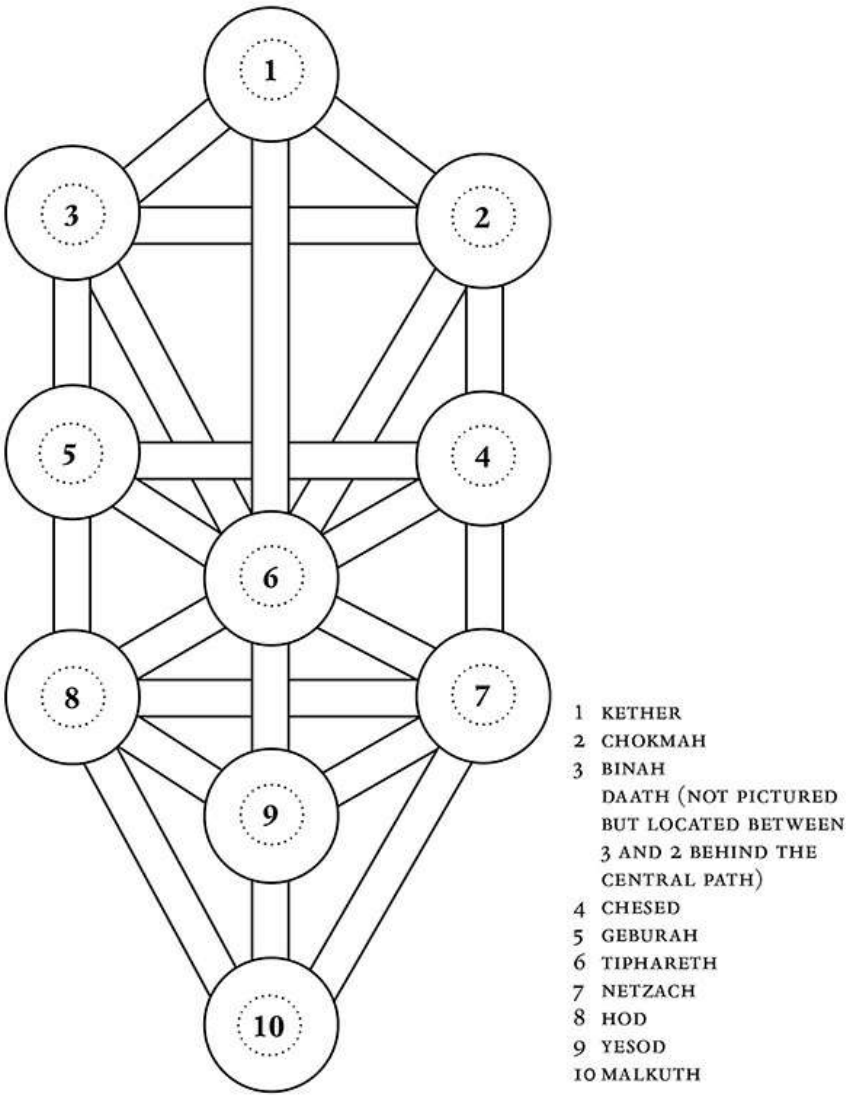

ILLUSTRATION 76—THE SEPHIROTH ON THE TREE OF LIFE: Like the chakras, the sephiroth are levels of consciousness leading toward enlightenment. Unlike the chakras, they aren't anchored in the body; rather, these are embodiments of divine light. By working through the issues illuminated on the twenty-two paths between the sephiroth, we journey through a process called "awakening the God-spark." Dualistic in nature, each sephira represents a level of consciousness but also a manifestation of the God-spark. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

The sephiroth are similar to chakra energy bodies, and the paths correlate to energy channels, so here we find an energy system comparable to the Hindu system. In the latter the kundalini climbs the stairway of our spine; in the

Kabbalah we flow through the Tree of Life. While the Hindu centers are anchored in the body, however, the sephiroth are symbolic in nature.[26]

The Ten Sephiroth

The sephiroth, the consciousness centers of the Kabbalah, are found with various spellings, including sefirot and sephirot. I have chosen to use the term *sephiroth* for consistency; sephiroth is plural and the singular term is sephira. There are also many spellings of the names of each sephira.

The sephiroth can be described in several ways. A sephira is related to a specific title, which reveals its primary principle; a God name, showcasing one quality of God; an archangel or order of angels, which act as guides for that sphere; a placement in relation to the body; a vice or imbalance that happens if we don't grasp the sphere's teaching; a learning, the wisdom gained through this sphere; a celestial body; and a color. Refer to Illustration 76 for the placement of these spheres, which I describe as follows:

Malkuth, The Tenth Sphere

Connect with the Natural World—Malkuth mirrors our daily consciousness and affects our everyday life. Obtaining energy from its kin sephiroth, it incarnates the last of the Divine Spark and enables us to embrace the Divine within the natural world.

Yesod, The Ninth Sphere

Form Your Foundation—Everything is possible within Yesod, the location of the images and desires of our mind and personality. Within this sphere we shape the thoughts and ideas that will create our physical world. Deep within also lie our subconscious, biological, and psychic identities. We play in Yesod to sculpt visualizations so we may obtain energy from other spheres.

Hod, The Eighth Sphere

Open to Empathy—Often called Glory, Hod holds the advanced thoughts and ideas we want running our lives. In charge of communication, Hod wisdom provides enlightened ideas, words, and teachings: those that can be described as mysterious and alchemical. Hod also rules travel, movement, and thinking.

Netzach, The Seventh Sphere

Reveal the Meaning of Feelings—Ah, this beautiful world! Netzach hands us the lens we need to see the world as exactly that—beautiful, brilliant, and wondrous. It helps us cleanse the emotions that inhibit this perception and instead connect with "wise feelings," those enabling gratitude and other forms of joy. Represented by a lightning bolt, Netzach inspires our passions so they create only good.

Tiphareth, The Sixth Sphere

Unlock the Wise Heart—Sheer awe enables us to unlock the brilliant truth within as Tiphareth, at the center of the tree, asks us to give of ourselves for the love of all.

Geburah, The Fifth Sphere

Summon Inner Strength—We are replete with strength and power, which Geburah invites forth. In service to change and decision making, we use Geburah energy to grab our courage and intelligence and use power ethically and correctly.

Chesed, The Fourth Sphere

Flow with Love—We all aspire to compassion and grace, and Chesed enables these divinely human traits. Often compared to the flow of water, Chesed allows us to quench the needs of others.

Binah, The Third Sphere

Own Your Higher Thoughts—Binah shows us how to shift from mundane and often negative thinking to higher thoughts. Often we must stop struggling with self-pity to make this leap.

Daath, The Non-Sphere

The Void—Daath contains unlimited potential, much like the vacuum or virtual state described in quantum physics. It signifies our potential for great good or great evil and the space in which we make decisions between the two. Located in our upper heart area, Daath is used to access creative energy

and manifest our dreams, but only after we deal with our fear of the unknown.

CHOKMAH, THE SECOND SPHERE

See Through Illusion—We all deceive ourselves; our cloudy thinking blocks the light of love and wonder. Chokmah calls upon our psychic and inner gifts to help us see purely.

KETHER, THE FIRST SPHERE

Meet the Crowning Glory—Lying at the crown, the top of the tree, we can now embrace the beaming love of the Ein Sof. This was the first manifestation of reality.

The Sephiroth and Other Esoteric Systems

There are many theories about how the energy bodies in various esoteric systems relate to the sephiroth. Several showcase the relationship between the chakras and the Kabbalistic sephiroth. Illustration 77 outlines one such way to look at the relationship between these two systems. Many other esoteric orders relate to the Kabbalah as well, including areas of Taoism, the Rosicrucian and Golden Dawn orders, African spiritual sects, and some types of Traditional Chinese Medicine.[27]

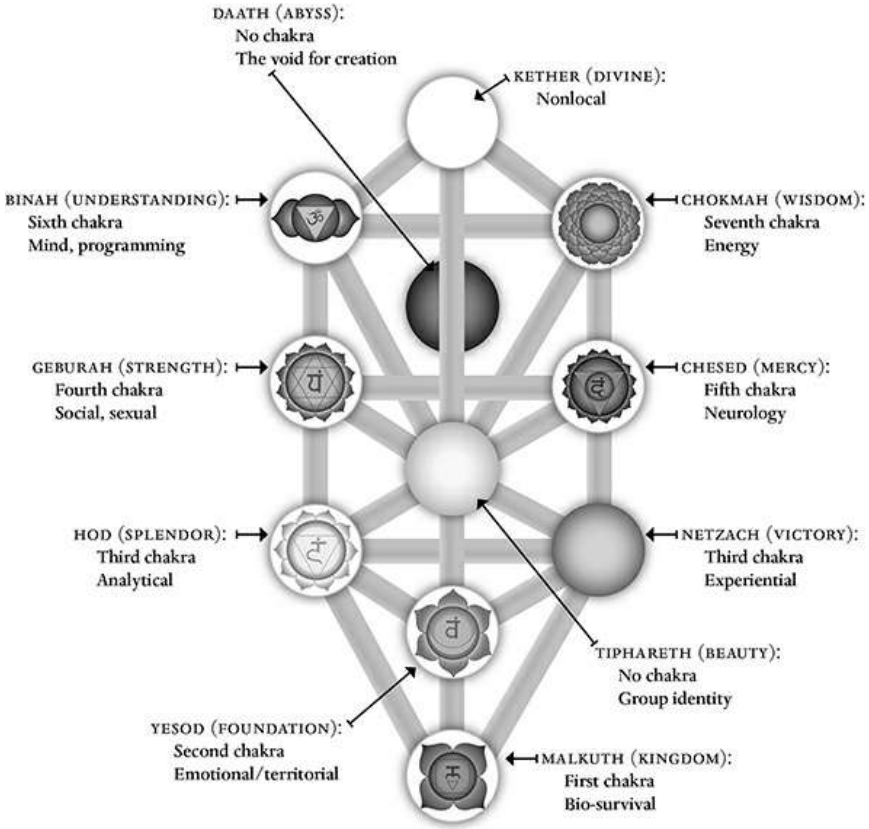

ILLUSTRATION 77—THE CHAKRAS AND THE KABBALAH: This diagram shows one way to associate the chakras and the Kabbalah. See the insert for a color version that shows a different assignment of the chakras to the Kabbalah. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

One of the comparisons between the Chinese Taoist religion, which uses the I Ching, and the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, is shown in Illustration 78. Note that there are many versions of this association; I offer this one only as an example.

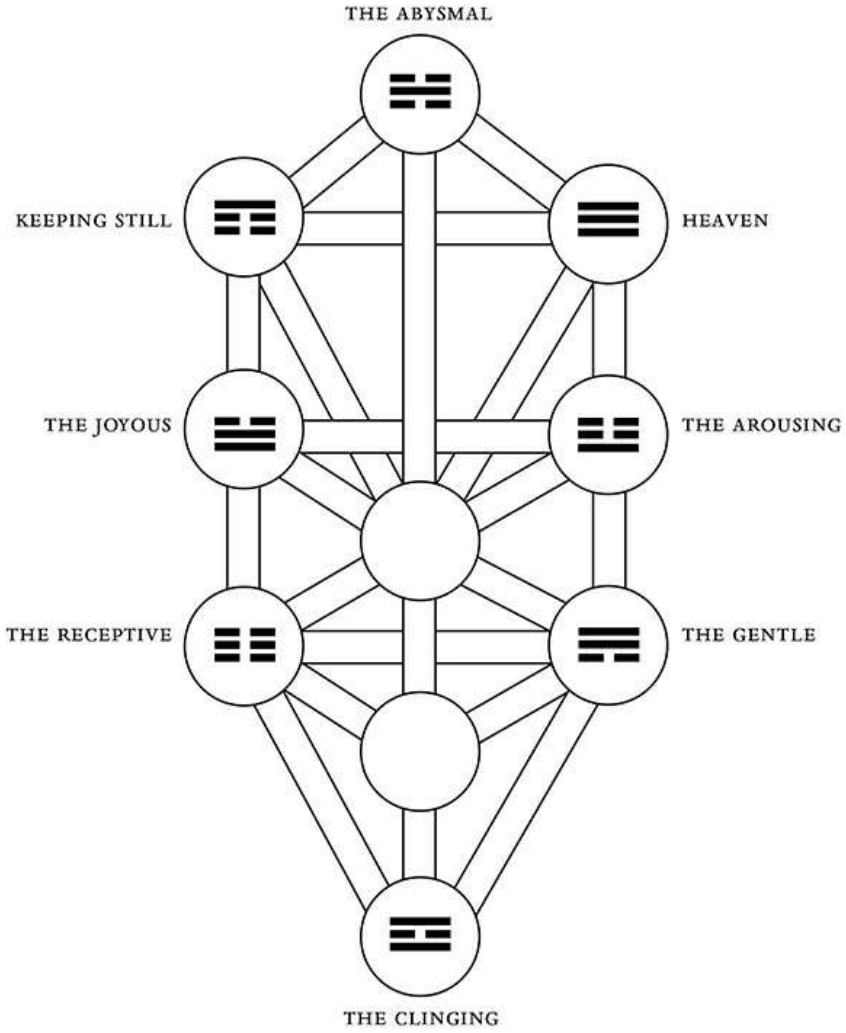

ILLUSTRATION 78—THE TAOIST I CHING AND THE KABBALISTIC TREE OF LIFE: The I Ching is a divination system within the Chinese Tao religion, which is based on eight oracular figures, or trigrams. As you can see in this circular diagram of these trigrams, they easily relate to several of the sephiroth. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

While traversing the Middle East we discovered a chakra-like system imbedded in one of the world's oldest religions, Zoroastrianism, as well as the Islamic Sufi path. Here we also delved into the Jewish Kabbalah, a mystical tradition that featured another version of the Tree of Life, upon which chakra-like energy bodies are suspended.

To round out our tour, we now shift our focus to the Americas. As you'll see, the tribes and civilizations of the Americas shared many of the same

concepts we have found in other parts of the world. To me, this underlines the thought that the world truly is one people and one tribe.

[contents]

Chakra Medicine in the Americas

> "The Universe is the mirror of the people,"
> the old teachers tell us, "and each person is
> a mirror to every other person."
>
> Hyemeyohsts Storm

The Americas are divided into three regions—North, South, and Central, or Mesoamerica. Though distinct from one another in many ways, all share equally in chakra riches. Common themes among the indigenous people of all three areas include the following: the belief in a single Creator that originated this dualistic world, ages of human existence that are increasingly degrading, levels of reality that apply to the cosmos and the human body, a mysterious and lovely subtle energy that ties us together, a ladder to enlightenment, and the existence of chakra-like concepts and energy bodies.

My goal in this chapter is to profile representative cultures from each of the three Americas, journeying back in time in our quest for chakra wisdom. While my focus is historical, many of these societies continue to teach the same knowledge they passed down for thousands of years, revealing consistency in their sacred power.

I recognize I could have included many other societies, but like Europe, the Americas are vast in cultural terms. So I have selected those that present the most thoroughly developed ideas for our study. And as you examine each of these three geographic areas, you will notice that their chakra principles and concepts are more similar than dissimilar.

One of the through-lines addressed in this chapter centers on this question: where did the chakra knowledge of the Americas come from? One answer might be that it was carried in from other places in the world. Historically, the Americas are considered to have been originally settled in two ways.

Mongols from Northeast Asia settled North America after crossing the Bering Strait around 15,000 BCE and gradually moved into South America. Much later, exploration by boat brought settlers from England, France, Spain, Italy, and other nations. However, you will see that I include yet another theory, which is that chakra medicine is a leftover from the lost continent of Atlantis. (In chapter 33, you will acquaint yourself with beliefs from the American continent that suggest chakra concepts were carried from the stars.)

As you visit these various American cultures and dip into their ancient teachings, know that you are in good company. People the world over have revered the cultures of this hemisphere and partaken of their wisdom teachings.

North American Chakra Medicine Concepts

Nearly all indigenous North American tribal peoples share a strong commonality centered on caring for the earth. Their prophecies also foretell great changes, including a cyclical destruction of this planet as a result of how we treat her. And in some common lore are sown the seeds for a potential time of peace.

We are all seeking a way to renew the spirit of humankind, and through this, to build a rainbow bridge of hope for all beings occupying this planet. Teachings kept in secret for thousands of years, and only recently revealed by people from Sioux, Cheyenne, Hopi, and Cherokee tribes, have the potential to save us all—from ourselves, but also *for* ourselves. As you review the various chakra medicine systems I present here, concentrate on the main messages of subtle energies and structures brought forth in their concepts. See in them the hope for enlightenment that is carried by us all.[1]

Hopi Chakras

From endless space to a world that must change, the story of the Hopi Native Americans, an ancient tribe currently living in northern Arizona, is one of courage and natural grace. It also includes energy centers that are equivalent to the chakras. One of the most essential sources of information about the

Hopi is Frank Waters, author of *Book of the Hopi*.[2] This volume is a wonder, a compilation of information gleaned from thirty Hopi elders. The energy centers of the Hopi are best understood within the context of their creation story, which Waters describes.

According to the Hopi, there have been three previous worlds on this planet; we now live in the fourth. The first world was Tokpela, or endless space. Initially there was only the Creator, Taiowa, and the void. Beginning, end, time, shape, and life were awake only in Taiowa's mind. It was when he conceived of the finite that the first man, Sotuknang, emerged.

Sotuknang's job was to put the universe in harmonious order. His helper was Kokyangwuti, or Spider Woman, who added joy to the emerging forms of the universe. Kokyangwuti took some earth, mixed it with saliva, and molded two twin beings who helped complete the earth, echoing the sound of the Creator and the vibratory centers on the earth's axes. Thus did the earth become the instrument of sound to carry the Creator's message.

Spider Woman next gathered soil of four colors—yellow, red, white, and black—and mixed these with her saliva. She molded these lumps of colored clay and covered them with her white cape—her creative wisdom. Singing over the figures, she transformed them into four men and four women. This was during the first stage of creation, which was colored dark purple, representing mystery. Humans became more complete during the next two stages of creation, the second of which was yellow, for the breath of life. The third was red, representing the warmth of love.

Against this backdrop, the first people were told that their real parents are Mother Earth and Father Sun. While we have an earthly family and a tribal clan, we are ultimately citizens of the universe.

We were also informed that both the human body and the earth itself have axes and vibratory centers. The north and south poles form the planetary axes and the spine is the human axis; for both, the axes control equilibrium of movement and function. And along each axis are vibratory centers that echo the primordial sound of life through the universe and emit warnings of anything that is going wrong.[3]

See the correspondences between the Hopi legends and classical chakraology? There is a primal Creator but dualistic agents; there are primary elements composing reality, with vibratory centers composed around a central line; and—as is imbedded in so many spiritual mythologies—the potential for hope, a way to transcend evil and darkness.

As the Hopi say, we are made of two principles: good and evil. The left side of the body, related to the heart, is good. Our right side is evil, for it has no bounds. However, we need both aspects. While the left side is awkward, it is also wise. While the right side is clever and strong, it lacks wisdom. All would be well, and could be again, if we would but merge these two aspects and follow the Creator's plan.[4]

In the beginning humankind followed the universal blueprint, using our energy centers in a way that enhanced well-being for all. Because of this integrity, during the first world (*Tokpela*), a medicine man was able to tell what was wrong by laying his hands on these centers:

Top of the Head: The soft spot or *kopavi*, the open door through which life is conceived and by which we communicate with the Creator. This center hardens in red light and the door closes until we die, when it opens so we may depart this realm.

Above the Eyes: This area, the thinking organ of the brain, enables humanity to think about their actions and work on this earth while conforming to the Creator's plan.

The Throat: This center ties together the openings in the nose and mouth through which we receive the breath of life. Ultimately, we attune here to the primordial sound of creation and return praises to the Creator.

The Chest: The vibratory organ of the heart pulses with life. It asks us to be of one heart, as two-hearted people permit evil feelings to enter.

The Belly: Actually located in the solar plexus, this is the throne upon which the Creator sits and directs our functions.

The medicine man uses his hands because they are instruments of seeing; they can sense vibration and determine whether the life energy runs strongly or weakly. Sometimes the problems a person brings to the medicine man come from physical causes (such as uncooked food), but at other times they move into the body from the outside. In the latter case, they can be drawn by a person's negative thoughts or from those who are "two heart."[5]

The reason the first world ended was that we didn't use our vibratory centers solely to follow the Creator's plan. Humans also forgot the plan in the second world, and the animals separated from us then. During the third world, people again became preoccupied with earthly plans. We are in the fourth world, during which we were given stone tablets to help us remember the truth.[6]

As time went on, the snake and the antelope became important symbols. The snake symbolizes the earth mother, but because it also comes from the bowels of the earth, it is equated with the lowest vibratory centers, which control the sex organs. The antelope was equated with the highest center.[7] Hence the Hopi eventually developed symbols that represented our current existence as polar opposites, the gross physical and the high spiritual. In the earlier ages the first two chakras weren't emphasized, nor was the snake.

Prayer from Father Sun and Mother Earth

A Hopi prayer relates the problems and possibilities of these times. Says Father Sun:

> You are my children, and I am very concerned about you. I hold you to protect you from harm, but my heart is sad to see you leaving my protecting arms and destroying yourselves. From the breast of your mother, the Earth, you receive your nourishment, but she is too dangerously ill to give pure food. What will it be? Will you lift your father's heart? Will you cure your mother's ills?…If the world is saved, you all will be saved…We will all be happy in the Peaceful Way.[8]

The Tsalagi (Cherokee) Energy System

Knowledge of the Tsalagi energy system has been passed down for thousands of years, most recently into the hands of author and spiritual leader Dhyani Ywahoo.

Tsalagi is the Native word for the Cherokee, who track their roots back to the Pleiades. They call their off-world knowledge the "Fire of Wisdom," an amalgam of spiritual principles, naturalism, mysticism, and an understanding of classical and quantum physics. Much of the teaching is attributed to the "Pale One," who appeared in the Smoky Mountains in 837 BCE. Born of a "woman who knew no man," he was called the "seed of the stars" and came to bring the Cherokee back into the correct relationship with self and others.

The Tsalagi story of earth depicts it as an intricate web of meridians, matrixes, and interconnections, and the physical body is a mirror of these. Trees communicate between all living beings and the stars through vibration; the white pine is extremely important in this regard. As a sort of Tsalagi "tree of life," its roots gather oscillations from the ground and transfer them into the atmosphere, after which they enter the human brain, entraining us to the earth's frequencies.

The material world was spun from a plane of light called Galunlati, through the grace of Star Woman, the daughter of the father of all. We are linked to these higher forms through five principles, five tones, and five rivers of color and sound that flow through the navel. These energies are situated on a continuum that moves from emptiness to sound or intention; intention to wisdom; and wisdom to love. These three ideas are near-exact mirrors of the Hindu bindus, or points, of the sacred triangle.

Five sounds rise from the emptiness and connect the left and right hemispheres of our brain, enabling healing. Each bodily organ resonates with one of these overtones, which operate on a pentatonic scale (*penta* meaning five). As a sort of kundalini in reverse, these harmonies are received through the top of the head and flow to the base of the spine. In the heart they bring about higher change in the form of energetic transformation.

The Earth Shells and Energy Bodies

The Tsalagi believe there are two shells around the earth: the outer is solar and the inner is lunar. "Wind shields," or energetic forces, flow within these shells in response to shifting tectonic plates and tides, forming the earth's magnetic field. Layers of energy also surround the earth, including EMF and a "lightning gridwork" that sends energy between the layers. The greater universe is perceived as a great crystalline plate suspended by four spiraling cords. The plate vibrates continuously, as does everything it holds. Other universes also exist but do not touch one another.

Our bodies operate the same way. Lunar and solar energies pulse in and through our spines in spiraling circles. This reminds me of the oscillating movements of magnetic waves, red blood vessels, and kundalini, as described in Part 5. The counterclockwise swastika describes these movements, which result in a bioresonance between humans and the earth. Our role is to consciously appreciate the elements that create the backdrop for this resonance.

The Tsalagi perceive humans as living in a field of mind that interconnects the earth and the stars. (In this I'm reminded of the zero-point field, also discussed in Part 5.) To reach our potential we must send "fire" up the spine, thus activating our entire self. In this way, the spine is comparable to a ladder to heaven. Three different fires occupy the spine:

Blue Fire of Will: Establishes decisiveness for action.

Compassion Fire: Enables understanding and manifestation of purpose.

Fire of Active Intelligence: Supports harmonic action.

These three fires must penetrate five doorways in the body, which can hold blocked energy. These doorways are indicative of the basic chakras.

Solar Plexus: Transforms negative feelings and thoughts to achieve higher action.

Heart: Source of the intellect, it is surrounded by two electrical fields: one moving clockwise and one counterclockwise. These formulate our

purpose, the manifestation of dreams in concrete reality. We heal our heart to become a pivot point between heaven and earth.

Throat: The power of our voice helps us say yes and make it so.

Medulla: Located at the base of the skull, the medulla holds our past, including issues from past lives. Ironically, its gift is to help us live in the present.

Crown: Found in the fontanel, this site secretes fluid after an initiate has completed lessons focusing on nonattachment. It creates a full connection to the higher field of consciousness and allows us to actualize the three burning fires.

There are four centers in addition to these five. One lies in the "secret" region of the reproductive system, another at the navel (which receives five subtle airs and five rivers that nourish the five bodily systems), one at the thymus, and another at the hands and feet, connected by a single energy that ascends one side of the body and descends the other.[9]

The Sioux Nation: Energies of Spirit

The Sioux nation comprises three divisions: Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota. Honoring Wakan Tanka, the grandfather spirit, the Sioux employ symbols that frequently correspond to elements of chakra medicine. To the Sioux, every facet of a being is circular, as life is cyclical in nature. The Sioux medicine wheel is key: a circle with four medicine arrows inside, each arrow representing a direction of thought and a state of mind. North reflects wisdom; south is innocence; east is far seeing, or the ability to see into the future; and west relates to inner seeing. As with all other spiritualities we've featured, the goal of this pathway is enlightenment, which is achieved when we can merge all four directions of thought.

Interesting to those on the chakra quest, the medicine stone wheel, a tool used for growth and learning, shows seven stones in the middle (see Illustration 79). These indicate the seven types of human personalities. The stones circling these inner seven stones represent plants, animals, or people.[10]

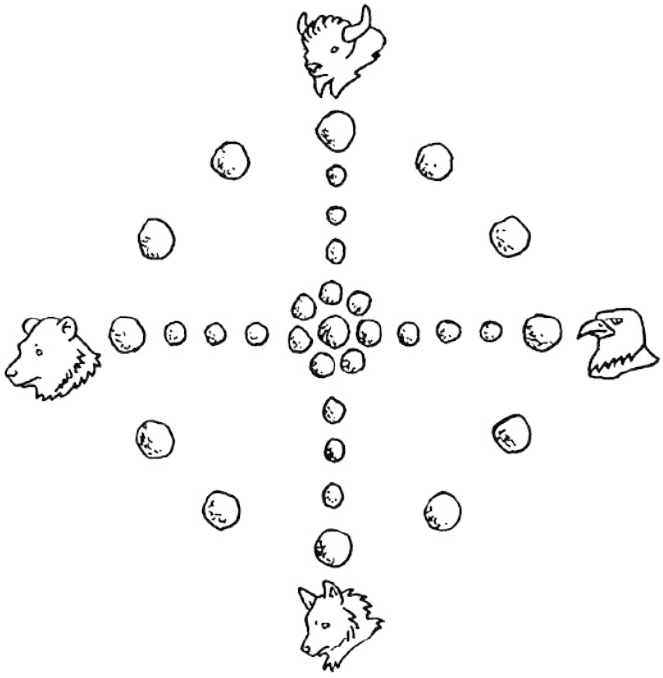

ILLUSTRATION 79—THE SEVEN STONES OF THE SIOUX: The Sioux medicine wheel is a tool for enlightenment. The seven stones in the middle (grouped around the center stone) represent human qualities such as hate, love, or fear. The stones around these symbolize the groups of beings on this planet, including humans, plants, and animals. Each of the four cardinal directions indicates a different path in life. A person is considered to be born on one of these paths, which are as follows (provided are thoughts from two different systems): East—far seeing, vision; North—wisdom, warriorism; West: introspection, shamanism; and South—innocence, healing. ILLUSTRATION BY ELISABETH ALBA

Robert Ghost Wolf, who draws on his Lakota and Iroquois lineage, also asserts that our energetic light bodies are capable of inviting ascension, a process whereby we leave behind our physical body while our higher self merges with the light. To influence this process, we can access seven rays of the rainbow, which help us spin a dreamlike existence.[11] These rays are presented in chapter 20's section "Energetic Fields: The Seven Rays," where they are compared to other seven-ray systems.

The Iroquois: "The Mystic Potence"

Is there not a strange and wonderful power that inhabits all things? The Iroquois, as well as other tribes, believed this, employing the word *orenda*, "mystic potence," to designate what we now call energy. This personal

energy contrasts to universal prana, and because of its sacredness it is a necessary inclusion in our chakra medicine portfolio.

Originally the Iroquois League was made up of five peoples, each with its own dialect: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. Eventually the Tuscarora joined the League. In 1902, J. N. B. Hewitt published a paper about orenda and the Iroquois, which he researched in collaboration with a full-blood Seneca chief, drawing upon his own background as part Iroquois as well as his academic expertise.[12] Hewitt's research helps explain Iroquois ritual statements like this one:

> A shaman has great, powerful orenda.
> A fine hunter has superior orenda…
> When a storm is brewing, the "storm maker" is preparing its orenda.[13]

Hewitt explains that orenda isn't the same as mind or soul, any more than we could compare it to prana or mana. Rather, it is the personal energy of an entity or creature. Each being is unique but possesses orenda suitable to its own kind. Because orenda is a power, though it is sacred, it can be used for evil as well as good.[14]

Do you want to experience your own orenda? Consider conducting the following exercise.

EXERCISE: **In Times of Trouble**

I have redesigned the following guided meditation based on Hewitt's material about orenda. The original passage comes from Donald Broadribb, author of *The Mystical Chorus*, the source of the Hewitt material.[15]

Gather your troubles and close your eyes. Now imagine that you are enveloped in a great woods. There you surrender your orenda, your personal energy, to pray for help from a large Grandfather Tree. Your Grandfather Tree summons the squirrels and birds, the earth's red clay, and the berry bushes and flowers, which emanate their own orenda just for you. The birds sing to share their orendas, untying your struggles

from you. The chorus of every power orchestrates a solution for you and you alone, their mighty powers soothing you into peace.[16]

Intertribal Centers of Higher Knowing

The Deer Tribe Metis Medicine Society, through the Shamanic Lodge of Ceremonial Medicine, has collected knowledge from several Native American traditions. All of the tribes represented refer to North, Central, and South America as Turtle Island. This combined knowledge specifically relates to the elders called the Twisted Hairs, or warriors of power.

Warriors become self-reliant and self-actualizing by flowing with the continuous energy of "everything in a harmonic way." They must conquer their own inner and outer tyrants and remain centered amid chaos, following the sacred laws.

Warriors work with the "flowering tree of life," or ten chakras, also called wheel centers or energy-light vortexes. According to the Deer Tribe Metis Medicine Society, these wheel centers are anchored in the body in these points:

Soul Wheel: Universal life force

Great Light Wheel: Aura-energy design

Chuluama Wheel: Karma and the physical body

Dream Wheel: Sacred mind

Ancestor Wheel: Spirit

Human Wheel: Communication

Animal Wheel: Emotions

Plant Wheel: Change

Earth Wheel: Life path

Sun Wheel: Creation

Stationary Assemblage Point: Governs how we perceive reality; ideally situated in the central chakra line

Moving Assemblage Point: Synonymous with chi, circulates through the meridians to establish natural cycles

The Great Light Assemblage Point: Remains in the navel to link to the truth of the universe[17]

Warriors also must learn how to use their extrasensory ten eyes and five ears, which are described in this way:

The Ten Eyes

Left Eye: Sees objects in relationship to ourselves

Right Eye: Perceives our relationship to an object

Psychic Eye: Views the spirit world

Animal/Heart Eye: Sees reality of dangers, truth, and untruth

Shadow Dream Eye: Sees in dreams and memory

Spirit Eye: Perceives spirit of what it touches, like a "seeing hand" extending from the heart

Mirror Dream Eye: Sees dreams of what it touches, as if a hand extends from the mind

Karma Eye: Perceives images we hold in the body

Aura Eye: Sees the design of energy

Soul Vine Eye: Perceives interconnection to all things within everything

The Five Ears

Left Ear: Hears sounds in relationship to ourselves

Right Ear: Hears our relationship to sound

Middle Ear: Hears inner dialogue or communication between our lower and higher selves

Heart Ear: Hears truth and untruth, the unspoken language

Soul Vine Ear: Hears our interconnection to all things within everything

EXERCISE: **Listening with Your Five Ears**

Based on the depiction of a warrior's five ears, I have created this five-day exercise for you.

On each of five days in a row upon awakening, pray to Spirit, asking it to open one of the five ears. Start with the left ear; all day long, listen intuitively to everything that is said, as well as to all sounds, hearing them as if they are speaking straight to you. The next day, focus on your right ear and erase the meaning of the sounds, whenever possible, allowing yourself to feel the sounds instead. On the third day, pay attention to your middle ear and the conversation between your everyday self and your higher self. On the fourth day, hear with your heart ear, separating truth from untruth. Know what is truly being communicated. On the fifth day, open your soul vine ear, taking in the messages based on interconnectivity and union. At the end of this experiment, spend time reflecting on what you have heard and learned.

Mesoamerican Chakra Systems

The Mesoamerican region has housed dozens of cultures, many of which exchanged similar beliefs, including some that fit well in our chakra medicine suitcase. In this section we will start our journey with the Huichol, the most ancient of indigenous tribes, who are still living in central Mexico. The Huichol feature a beautiful paradigm replete with sacred colors and magical doorways that hint at subtle energy expertise. A short exercise with the Kuna Indians of Panama will offer you a way to experience the view that spirits inhabit the body at chakra locations.

We will then drop in on the Mayans, who disappeared from the area around the ninth century CE, remaining with them for the rest of our Mesoamerican journey mainly because they had a cosmological system that is the best preserved of the region and is replete with chakra knowledge.

It's also pertinent to know that the Mayans were influenced by and influenced their neighboring ancestral cultures, which included the Olmecs to the northwest of the expanded Yucatan area; the Zapotec and Mixtec of

Oaxaca, west of the isthmus; and cultural centers in Teotihuacan and Tula to the north, in central Mexico. For example, the Yucatan Mayans adopted the Toltec god Quetzalcoatl as Kukulcan, a serpent god similar to the East Indian kundalini figure.

The Mayans are often thought to be the first fully developed Mesoamerican civilization, perhaps starting around 2500 BCE, although they built most of their cities between 250 and 900 CE. They only rose to greatness in their later years, however, adopting much of their culture from the younger Olmec civilization, which some suggest was most powerful between 1400 and 400 BCE, leaving behind a pyramid and carved heads that resembled large African warriors. (As a comparison, the Incan civilization in the Andes, which we will cover next, is usually traced back to about 1200 CE.)

In their later days, many of these societies coincided with the rule of the Aztecs, which at one time covered nearly the entirety of what is now Mexico and extended into other areas of Central America. They were part of the Nahuatl-speaking people, who originated in northwestern Mexico and the southwestern United States and immigrated into central Mexico around 500 CE. The Nahuatl community includes the Toltec and the Aztec cultures, among others, but are most frequently referred to as Aztecs. They reached their height in the early 1500s. To sum up the timeline, the Mayans learned a lot from the Olmecs, and the Aztecs followed about four hundred years after the Mayan civilization began to shrink. The Incans lived in a completely different region and lasted less than three hundred years before they were wiped out.[19]

As I will make clear, the Mayans created a complete and well-organized subtle body system that included chakras. Many believe that the Olmecs held much of the same knowledge and were capable of ocean voyages, which might be how they gathered this information. As a case in point, Olmec art and artifacts feature individuals with Negroid, Asian, and European features. One particular monument shows a bearded man who looks more like a Mediterranean Phoenician than a Mexican. It is also suggested that black Africans could also have come to the Americas from Egypt. As well, the

Olmecs frequently depicted human heads with a V-shaped cleft on the top, perhaps symbolizing the crown chakra and the entry of energy from the Milky Way.[20]

The Aztecs, too, employed chakra medicine–like features in their cosmology. Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of war, was born as an adult in the form of a serpent of fire—comparable to kundalini. This serpent has seven spheres, and it is often compared to the kundalini-housed spine and the seven chakras.[21]

As you peruse the systems featured in this section, know that they are also inclusive of the thought of many cultures in Mesoamerica and around the world.

Huichol Indians and the Light of the Gods

The Huichol Indians are an ancient tribe that has lived in the Sierra Madres in central Mexico for at least fifteen thousand years, according to carbon dating from the ashes of their sacred fireplaces. The age of these altars suggests they are the oldest religious shrines in America.

The Huichol call themselves the Wixarika or "the people" in their Uto-Aztecan language, which is distinct from the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs discussed in this section. Their pantheon consists of four main deities and a sun god, with two opposing forces in the world: the sun and the water. While they don't name the chakras per se, their mystical understandings fit directly into the chakra medicine treasure chest.[22]

The Huichol visualize their land as a rhombus on a map. Its five-pointed shape underscores the importance of the number five. The world has five regions corresponding to five mothers. The sun is carried through the universe by five serpents, sacred cobs of corn, and peyote, the holiest of plants. In fact, the Huichol travel hundreds of miles every year on pilgrimage to Wirucuta in central Mexico, where they gather for their peyote ceremony.

There are five colors sacred to the Huichol, each associated with a point of the cosmos:

Yuawime: Blue, south

Tuxame: White, north

Ta+lawime: Purple, west

Taxawime: Yellow, east

Ysayule: Multicolor, center

These colors are used in Huichol art, which encompasses paintings, weavings, and the creation of colorful yarn crosses wrapped around two twigs. These crosses form a rhombus of color depicting five crosses, or eyes, in total. Sometimes called *Ojo de Dios*, "God's eye," these yarn designs symbolize the power of seeing and understanding the unknowable, or the Mystery.Each color reflects an aspect of the earth; for instance, blue means water or rain and black is linked to death.[23] But these colors are much more than elemental representations: they are also part of our chakra medicine kit.

There are two subtle energy concepts close to the Huichol heart: *uxa* and *nierika*. Nierika represents a multidimensional idea meaning "in which one can see." It is both a concept and an object. Conceptually it represents the power of supernatural vision, but it also refers to the hole in the center of a wheel that radiates energy much like a chakra.[24]

The term is also used to describe a face, the painting of a face depicting the emanation of energy (like an aura), an eye, a mirror, a colored light, or an art piece featuring a person visited by the gods. It is the eye through which the gods see humans—and vice versa. Almost all art is perceived as a nierika, since art reveals the world of the gods in one way or another, as well as the artist's ability to see what life is truly about.[25]

Uxa can mean root, paint, or color—the colors used by the gods to communicate. These colors arrive from sacred places and are found in sacred temples as well as in the natural elements. It is said that through these colors, the gods come down to earth.[26] Shamans emanate a special light, and they can perceive colors on others and use this knowledge to figure out what is happening with them. For instance, a shaman can read when the soul is hungry or depleted because the uxa fades around a person's face.

As is understood in cultures that embrace knowledge of the aura and subtle energy, uxa is considered to be here and there, if not everywhere, perceived as a glint or sheen. Shamans perform healing using these sacred colors, expelling demons and spells and encouraging forth the gods. They can also determine people's character and state of spiritual development.[27] Many esoterics compare the colors, especially when found in the shape of a wheel, to the chakras and the uxa to the aura.

Nierika is the secret doorway sought by initiates the world over. Author Christopher Penczak perceives this Huichol doorway as at the base of the skull, an area called the Wind Mansion in Chinese acupuncture and the lalana chakra in Hinduism. It is through this secondary chakra site that we open to the worlds beyond.[28]

EXERCISE: **Cooling Off with the Kuna Indians**

A Native Indian tribe in Panama, the Kuna Indians speak their own language, called Tule, and believe in a creator/god dwelling far away. Malevolent spirits called poni roam the earth, causing sickness and disease.[29]

The Kuna believe they have eight selves, each associated with a different part of the body. One's personality is determined by the part of the body that governs them. For instance, the head governs an intellectual; the hands, a thief; and the heart, a romantic.[30] As well, they believe that spirits dwell in eight realms above and below the earth [31] and that the human being has eight souls, any of which can be abducted, thus causing a high fever.[32]

The Kuna access the good spirits to help them with healing. One of their processes is called "the way of cooling off," a mosaic of incantations that calls spirits to act on certain body parts and is especially helpful in cooling a fever. The Kuna system demonstrates parallels with the higher spiritual and chakra bodies of many cultures.

You can practice this "cooling off" process for yourself or another, either aloud or by silent meditative chanting, in an exercise I have

adapted from actual chants. You can recite the phrases for each of these aspects, in this order:

- Soul
- Blood
- Skin (clothing of the soul)
- Brain
- Hair
- Throat
- Eyes

First, summon the spirits to this healing meeting with a statement like this:

At the place of the rising sun, I call upon the Cooling-Off People. They are truly available to me.

Next use statements like these over each of the aspects mentioned:

I know that the Cooling-Off People are in their abodes and watching me. They are making me cool in my own abode.

Then conclude with phrases like these:

The spirits have all been counseled. I have been counseled, as well as my spirit.[33]

The Ancient Mayan Chakra System

The religion of the Mayan people is an indispensable step on our chakra medicine journey, as it enfolded ideas and concepts linked to nearly every topic we've been exploring. This religion is more than a spiritual approach; it is actually a spiritual science. Included in its magical folds are disciplines including geometry and other mathematical skills, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and cosmology. And, more often than not, its energetic principles and system mirror those of the classical chakra system.

As a backgrounder, indigenous to the Mexico area, as well as other South American areas such as El Salvador, is a group of people called the Nahuas.

They originated in what is now northwestern Mexico and migrated into central Mexico around 500 CE. Their culture underlies that of the Toltec and the Aztecs, who spoke Nahuatl. The Mayans lived in southern Mexico and northern South America from as early as 2600 BCE and reached their peak between 250 and 900 CE.

Early Nahaus have been thought of as a savage people, but at different points of time they integrated with the Mayans. It is suggested that they learned about "spiritual science" from the Mayans and adopted some of this information as their own—and vice versa. In fact, around 450 CE, the Mayan/Nahua religion bore great similarities to the ancient Hindus, encompassing comparable ideas in terms of chakra centers, kundalini, symbology, equations, and principles.

The similarity between the Mayan and Nahua cultures and the Hindus has spawned another great debate in terms of the origin of chakra medicine knowledge. One suggestion is that the "Mexican" Mayan were the source of chakra knowledge, bringing it with them to India, instead of the other way around. The other idea is that the South American Mayans are related to the Indus area.

At this point, it's important to understand the term *Naga Maya*. In general, the Nagas and the Mayas are thought to be two of four principal groups in ancient India. Some sources have led experts to believe that the Nagas were descendants of a people call the Danavas, who were said to have magical powers. Others equated the Nagas with the Mayas, hence the name of the Naga Maya tribe.

There are several conjectures about the Naga-Maya people/s. One early Vedic writer, Valmiki, was the author of two of the most sacred Hindu books, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. In his works Valmiki stated that the Naga Maya brought their culture to India, rather than the other way around.[34] In his book *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion*[35] Mayan authority Hunbatz Men adds that the Naga Mayans delivered their culture to other parts of Asia and to Africa as well. According to an Egyptian priest-historian, they were

called the Mayax people at that time. (Men is the source of most of the information in this section.)[36]

Other sources read the Mahabharata as saying that the Mayans were a tribe that left the Indian subcontinent and were the same people as the Nagas, the oldest Indian tribe ever recorded. The native Mayan language and counting system was parallel to the Naga systems, and old Sanskrit texts have actually been found in the Yucatan.[37] This interpretation would suggest that the Mayans might have originated in India, which would account for the similarities in beliefs. Incidentally, the term *naga* is often associated with serpents and has been used to describe a primitive people, called the Serpents of Wisdom, who were said to have populated America during the days of Atlantis.[38]

The Mayans believed that the sky was divided into thirteen areas, with gods residing in each. Most likely, they believed—as the Aztecs did—that there were nine underworlds as well. Their beliefs in this regard were related to the general Nahuatl philosophy that there was an original "father of the gods" who still sustains the cosmos. We are each a spark of this essence, who used four primary forces to bring about four manifested worlds. Each is associated with a divinity that relates to a color, cardinal direction, cycle of time, and element, and has a feminine counterpart. Here we find the same energetic complexities found in East Indian and other Asian systems, from the existence of *lokas,* or levels of the world, to the assignment of colors and elements to reality.[39]

Similar to Jews and early Christians, as well as to the portrayal of an eternal tree in the Bhagavad Gita, the Mayans identified with a living tree. The Jewish Kabbalah is based on the Tree of Life, which emanates energy bodies that encourage the attainment of higher consciousness. The Yoruba people also embrace a Tree of Life. The Mayans followed a similar path of enlightenment to gain the cosmic faculties of Quetzalcoatl, a serpent-god comparable to the Hindu serpent kundalini, all in pursuit of knowing the ultimate authority, which to the Mayans was Hunab Ku, the "only giver of movement and measure."

Mayan initiates were taught while young to manage their physical and mental energy. They referred to their spirit as *k'inan*, "of solar origin." They could achieve Quetzalcoatl status upon learning how to transform sacred energy in body and mind, which they did by developing the seven powers housed in the body.

The seven powers were depicted across their land at twenty-one thousand sacred sites in pictures, sculpture, carvings, and stories. Seven represented the galactic origin of the early Mayans, who—like many cultures addressed in this book—believed they came from the stars. And along with other Mesoamerican peoples, they worshipped the Milky Way as representative of Hunab Ku, who organized the galaxy from a "whirling disk," putting everything in motion.

The seven powers or forces were sometimes called the *chacla*—what could be more similar to the Hindu chakra? These were related to the Milky Way and its movement. One ascends as a light through the seven centers, starting from the primary center. *Chacla* also means "this my red," which references the color of the primary center. Like the Hindus, the Mayans placed the first chakra in the coccygeal area too, but they called it *k'u*, meaning "the sacred" or "God"; it also references "vibration." *Ku*, of course, is one of the root words of kundalini.

Hindus described the chakras with the symbolism of flowers (lotuses), and the Mayans use the word *lol*, which means "flower." Lol refers to vibration, and the "o" references consciousness with Spirit. The Mayans often symbolized the aura by using feathers, a representation of a realized being. Thus is everything about us dedicated to vibrating toward a higher form of realization. Showing still other similarities with the ancient Hindu system, the Mayans used words, tones, geometry, breathing, and other measures to help awaken the dormant powers.[40]

Mayan Elements

Nearly every culture works with the elements, and the Mayans had their own elemental classification of four elements.

Visible: Comparable to the physical body; can be detected with the five senses

Ethereal: Invisible under normal circumstances; compared to body heat

Mental: Forming spirit or personality; nourished by psychological factors; similar to the ego

Vital or Pure: The essence of all; this element underscores the Mayan belief that everything is made of energy

Rituals were aimed at involving these four elements and the principles they served.[41]

The Mayan Factor of José Argüelles

José Argüelles spent twenty-four years traveling the world to speak about the science of the fourth dimension, laying out cosmic stepping stones for metaphysical change. The cornerstone of his work was rendering the mathematical codes in the Mayan calendar. Argüelles perceived the Mayans as "intergalactic navigators" who came to this planet to educate us about time.

His work began with a vision of the Pyramid of the Sun in Teotihuacan, which he saw as a site where seekers of the One Creator could listen to the songs of the creation. He also perceived deep powers within individuals that needed to be reawakened and devoted his life to helping us figure out how to do this.[42]

When it comes to chakras, Argüelles's interpretation of the Mayan message is that we are ending an old age and beginning a new one that asks us to look beyond technology. We live at the bottom of an electromagnetic ocean, and the earth is like an ocean floor. We are made of a bioelectromagnetic circuitry capable of providing us much more EMF nourishment than we are aware of.

This circuitry connects our third-dimensional garment—the body—to a fourth-dimensional light body. The physical body operates with the five sense organs and the mind, as well as with neural canals, the brain, and the chakras: psychospiritual centers associated with the glandular system and subtle

energy flows. It is these ingredients that compose the "light body," the true skeleton of the physical body.

More specifically, the chakras receive currents of subtle energy directly through the *Kuxan Suum*, a roadway of galactic fibers that link us to three beings or sets of beings: Hunab Ku, higher solar lords, and guides. The chakras located at the crown, throat, heart, sexual organs, palms of the hands, and soles of the feet are able to link with information currents from the fifth through seventh dimensions, and the solar plexus chakra is especially important because it holds a "galactic umbilical cord" that enables us to become "star mediums," directly channeling galactic information. Fifty-two energy points interact with universal positive and negative currents to connect us with the universe.[43]

South American Chakras: The Andean Chakra Systems

The Andes are the longest chain of mountains in the world. Running down South America on the western coast, the range extends through Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, and Chile. Evidence of the first settlement of this region dates to about 11,000 BCE. For thousands of years these mountain people have encouraged a cosmology that is beautiful, organic, and often inclusive of knowledge about energy and energy bodies. The easiest way to feature these chakra medicine kin is to focus on the Incan civilization.[44]

Selecting the Incans as a central axis recognizes them as the most decisive population of the Andes. They ruled a significant part of the Andes until the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. Standard historians assert that the Incans took power in the twelfth century CE, although sages of the time testified that the Incans had already had 101 rulers by then; this places the Incan reign at approximately 1400 BCE.

In this section I feature two main Incan energy systems rather than one because while they are largely similar, they also differ in such features as the names and descriptions of the chakra-like energy bodies. Like many Andean people, the Incans believed themselves exiled from their true homeland

located in the "world above." Hence, like so many others around the world, they saw their origins in the stars, or at least a more heavenly sphere.[45] For more insight on yet another possible source of their knowledge, as well as what may have been a shared wellspring of chakra information, see the "Atlantis and the American Continent" section.

Another Andean culture I'll examine flourished before the Incans reigned and remains viable today. The Qollahuayas are descendants of the Aymaras, an indigenous Andean culture that preceded the Incans. I will also examine the post-Incan beliefs of the feminine Quilagos, who hold views similar to others of the Qero and other Native groups. Continuing the legend of the Incan mystery keepers, these speakers of Quechua or Kichwa continue to share Incan knowledge.[46]

One Andean group not discussed in this chapter is the culture of the Nazca plain, an area south of Lima settled between 200 BCE and CE 600. This region is covered with dozens of huge drawings of plants and creatures as well as geometric figures. These images are suggestive of some sort of higher force or culture at work, as they can only be fully seen from the air. I'm not examining this phenomenon in this chapter because there isn't any evidence of chakra-based knowledge linked with the Nazca lines. These geoglyphs, however, are often associated with cultures where shamanic tribes were present. Frequently these medicine people used hallucinogenic plants during their ceremonies, which promote spiritual flight or out-of-body journeying. It might be that these lines were drawn by these animist cultures to guide them into flights. Some of these geoglyphs, however, are linked to ley lines, an earth grid that is affiliated with earth-based chakras.[47]

Before I outline specific Andean cultures, I suggest you read through the next section, an overview of basic Andean shamanic beliefs, which will lay the groundwork for understanding the Andean mindset about chakras.

Atlantis and the American Continent

The Andean mind has always inclined toward mystical understandings. For example, the Incans perceived no separation between physical and spiritual life, pointing to the Southern Cross in the sky as a bridge from one side of the Milky Way to the other. Via this bridge, we depart from one lifetime and transition to another.[48] This celestial thinking, as well as many Andean and Mesoamerican philosophies, is so similar to those of other cultures, including shamanic and tantric traditions elsewhere, that we must wonder how it became so well established.

We turn to legends for possible answers: those of Lemuria and Atlantis. Lemuria was the last part of the great Mu continent that existed in the Pacific, its destruction starting in the year 30,000 BCE. Atlantis was a great civilization that most likely followed Lemuria and is referenced several times in this book.

While experts acknowledge that the Andes were populated by hunter-gatherer societies before the Incans, a few suggest that South America was settled over millions of years, with Peru hosting civilization perhaps 20,000 years ago. Material from the Theosophical Society suggests that the last fragment of Atlantis sank about 11,500 years ago, but that before then, its inhabitants fled and took root in the Andes.[49]

As twentieth-century occultist Dion Fortune explains, however, the Lemurians and Atlanteans dispersed well before this final sinking, and in the Americas they became the source of ancient Mayan, Incan, and Aztec esoteric knowledge. Some esoteric experts believe that the spreading of this knowledge occurred via land, sea, and underground.

Mesoamerica and South America are believed to be honeycombed with long tunnels, some running for hundreds of miles, such as from Colombia through Peru and Boliva to Chile, crossing over into the Amazon jungle in the east. As well, many

Native American peoples believed their ancestors originated from the subterranean realm or from caves in which they sought refuge. For instance, the Cherokee speak of an underground world that had mountains, trees, and people. The Aztecs asserted that their ancestors came from the land of Aztlan, and that after escaping it they ended up in a cavern called Chicomoztoc, or the Seven Cities of Gold, where they lived before emerging to the surface. It is interesting, too, that stories of ancestral origins in underground lands are also found in Africa and Australia, as well as Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Bengal, Burma, and other places. These types of ideas suggest that the destruction of early ages—which we're calling Lemuria and Atlantis at this moment—forced people into hiding. When and where they emerged, they shared their common cosmological knowledge.

A few other points supporting the idea of a shared ancestry include the suggestion that the Incan Temple of the Sun in Cusco, Peru, is a replica of the Sun Temple of Atlantis. The Incan temple name, Koricancha, means "place of gold" in Quechua, the word for gold meaning "the tears wept by the sun." What might have been more sorrowful than the loss of a people's land?

Many esoterics also believe that masters in the Tibetan Himalayas and the Andes were in touch over the years. Perhaps they were part of the same countries or guilds and developed telepathic ways to communicate?

Yet other mystical scholars have pinpointed ancient esoteric schools still located in the Peruvian Andes. One such group is the Solar Brotherhood, and another is the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays, members of a vanished Lemurian society with knowledge of the seven rays. Many have even claimed to have visited these brotherhoods and been initiated during modern times. To attempt to find them ourselves is said to be a both hopeless and

unnecessary endeavor; according to initiate tradition, when the disciple is ready, the master appears.[50]

Basic Andean Shamanism

Andean shamanism is rooted in a rich mysticism, as complex as those of ancient India and Asia. C. Michael Smith, an academic scholar and international teacher who studied with Don Alverto Taxo, explains that one of the core purposes of this indigenous shamanism is to help us merge the powers of the heart, represented by the condor, with the powers of the mind, signified by the eagle.

According to Smith, Andean shamans view the cosmos as an infinite series of nested eggs, like one Russian doll nestled within another. The ultimate reality is Jatun, or the Great Force of Life. Everything is a manifestation of this force, which arises within us. Within the multilayered egg is one called Wirococha, the lake of memory and wisdom, which could be compared to the collective unconscious. We enter yet another inner sphere to meet Pachamama, whose name is often equated with Mother Earth or Mother Nature, although she is also acknowledged as the cosmic mother. Within her is Ashpamama, called the Earth Mother by the Kichwa people. Every being on earth is an expression of all layers of the cosmic egg. Because Ashpamama is the most concrete of the beings that surround us, Andean spiritual practices aim at connecting with Ashpamama and her elements—earth, wind, fire, and water—as well as the stars and objects of the heavens, which are expressions of Pachamama.

As is found in many forms of shamanism, there are three accessible worlds within this one: the upper, middle, and lower. They are linked through a central axis, like a Tree of Life or cosmic mountain, and Smith compares these worlds to the realms of consciousness. We can all access each level of wisdom within ourselves.

To live a good life, the indigenous people of the Andes live by five main principles, which are reflected in each of the energy systems covered in this

section:

Munay: Loving with an open heart

Yachay: Knowledge that enables living in beauty

Llanka: Right action, leading to good work and a legacy

Kawsay: Respect for life

Ayni: Reciprocity—giving and receiving [51]

As you peruse the various systems outlined in this section, keep these principles in mind, and ponder the question of how we might all use this ancient knowledge to live as the condor and eagle, joined in peace.

The Qollahuayas: Energies in the Mountains

The Qollahuayas are a perfect example of an age-old anthropological truth: geography cannot be separated from spirituality. The shape of a landscape shapes the minds of its people to the extent that it formulates belief systems, as you shall see demonstrated by this tribe.

The Qollahuayas are Andean descendants of the Aymaras, a large South American Indian group who have lived in the high plains of the Andes for upward of five thousand years. With their largest settlement now in Bolivia, they share a mythology common to many Andean cultures, also acknowledging the existence of spirits in all the things of nature, such as streams and mountains.[52] The Qollahuayas were actually the religious specialists for the Incans and even today are known for their mysterious powers, which are dependent on the mountains they dwell upon.[53]

Inhabiting nine *ayllus,* or mountains, the Qollahuayas live on three layers of each mountain, with communities located on the low, middle, or high lands. Exchanging crafts, food, and specialized abilities between levels as well as between mountains, they interact to create a balanced interdependency. The three distinct strata of living arrangements are not only practical, however; each represents the three parts of the human body. As a people, their name, which means “sacred land,” is true at all levels.

Several of the mountains are home to two types of shamans, curers and diviners, with each group inhabiting different mountains. The curers live on two mountains and the diviners only on Mount Kaata.

The tribe's sacred medicine is quite advanced. People have traveled from afar to consult with the curers, who were performing brain surgery as early as 700 CE. Their medicine bags contain more than a thousand remedies, some equal in efficacy to aspirin, penicillin, and quinine, and it is said that the curers can effect change that allopathic doctors cannot.

Like the curers, the diviners are so renowned that visitors make lengthy journeys to have their fortunes read by these "Wizards of the Andes."[54]

The core belief of this shamanic culture is similar to that of other chakra medicine cultures. There are two basic principles. Blood (*yawar*) represents the life principle, and fat (*wira*) represents the energy principle. Rituals incorporate blood and fat to boost the vital organs of the mountains, as well as those of the sick or needy.[55] This dual function stems from the belief that the energy bodies of a mountain—both physical and subtle—are the same as those in an individual. In fact, the mountains and the creatures and plants dwelling upon them are understood in terms of human form. On Mount Kaata, for example, the mountainous highland is called Apacheta and signifies the head. Grasses and wool symbolize hair, and the lakes formulate eyes. The middle mountain region, or Kaata, is the trunk of the body. The lowlands of Ninokorin feature rows of corn, vegetables, and orchards, which represent legs and toenails.

Imbalance in any of these three mountain areas can create disease in the human body. A washed-away riverbed can cause an illness that can only be remedied by "feeding" the mountain. Humans can cause their own ailments through their behavior, however, such as by disrespecting the social order and the environment; in the same way, they can also hurt the mountain. Conflict between people causes disruption in the land. Rituals help restore balance between all aspects of a problem; one main ritual involves establishing tables containing animal and plant products to feed the earth and, therefore, the people.[56]

Chumpi Incan Teachings: The World of the Qero

The world of the Andean shaman often incorporates knowledge of the energetic anatomy. The Qero, a Quechua community, continue the legacy of the Incans in this matter. Their teachings are explained here via the work of Marc Torra, a cross-cultural expert and author who writes on various spiritual traditions.

This form of Andean shamanism distinguishes between the *nawis,* or chakra eyes, and *chumpis*, energetic belts that emerge from each nawi to envelop our body in protective bands. The Incan term for the tantric nadis is *ceques*, and the same word depicts earth energy lines linking the sacred sites (*wakas*) together. Life energy, called prana in the East Indian chakra system, is known as *kawsay* and is made of two energies: *hucha* is dense energy and formed from the negative emotions that build up in our energy body, and *sami* is the subtle energy made of higher energy. There are other types of energy as well.

The Incan system also features a life energy plane called the Kawsay Pacha, which is comparable to one of the many classical Vedic planes, Bhuvarloka, that occupies the space between the earth and the sun as a sort of subtle life force enveloping the world, and to the *poq'po,* or energy bubble, that is equivalent to the classic pranayama kosha, or energy body.

The concept of Kundalini Shakti is alive and well in this post-Incan philosophy, as the goal of spiritual practices is to raise the *Amaru,* or energy of the sacred anaconda, the great serpent of the boa family. Thus are space and time unified in the joint energy, called *pacha*. Determining the flow of our life is *anyni*, the Qero word for karma or reciprocity that creates balance between others and ourselves.

The nawi system of the Andean community is similar to the classical East Indian one in many ways. Both include seven main chakras, five of which are found in the same locations in the body. The qualities associated with each and their colors are similar, although the latter are not identical, and both chakras and nawis are considered organs of the energetic body, channeling cosmic energy to transmute one form of energy into another. The elements

are also the same in both systems. In the Andean system Torra describes, however, the elements assigned to the energy bodies differ.

The Incan system doesn't consider the classical seventh chakra a nawi, although it does acknowledge that sami is absorbed through the crown. By swapping the traditional second and seventh chakras, the Incan system still totals seven energy bodies, as a nawi is formed out of each eye. And even in this there is an interesting correlation to the East Indian system, as the ida and pingala nadis, the left and right channels, merge in the sixth chakra. In the Chumpi Incan tradition, someone who opens this third eye becames a *qawaq,* or clairvoyant of life energy.

Following are the nawis Torra outlines, according to the Andean Incan system:

NAWI	LOCATION	KEYWORD	COLOR	ELEMENT
Siqi	Root	Impulse/*atiy*	Black	Water/*unu*
Qosqo	Solar plexus/navel	Passion/*kuyay*	Red	Earth/*allpa*
Sonqo	Heart	Love/*munay*	Gold	Fire/*nina*
Kunkan	Neck	Knowledge/*yach'ay*	Silver	Air/*wayra*
Uma	Eyebrow	Intuition	Indigo	Ether/Akasha

The nawis in the eye are described this way:

Lloque Nawi: Left eye, feminine, lunar, mental

Phanya Nawi: Right eye, masculine, solar, active [57]

EXERCISE: **Experiencing the Nawis**

Would you like to experience these nawis yourself? According to Marc Torra, Andean shamanism includes three paths of initiation. As I describe how I understand these, I invite you to flow through the brief experiences I have designed based on his insights. Each exercise, which can be conducted as a guided meditation, assists the energetic body, or

poq'po, as well as the energetic dimension around the body, the *Kawsay Pacha*.

Cleansing (Saminchakuy): Take a few deep breaths and sense the subtle energy (*sami*) that streams from the cosmos to you. Concentrate on saturating your energy body (*poq'po*) with this divine energy, allowing it to wash the dense energy (*hucha*) out of you. Offer this dense energy to Pachamama, Mother Nature, so she can use it for other purposes.

Strengthening (Saywachakuy): Link with Pachamama and accept the ascending flow of sacred energy from her, allowing it to permeate your *poq'po* to strengthen it.

Transformation (Hucha Mujuy): Focus on your third chakra (*qosqo*) and allow it to digest any unneeded dense energy (*hucha*). Let the resulting energy form two energy flows. The ascending one is full of *sami* and the descending one of cleansed *hucha* energy. Both streams nourish your well-being.[58]

Incan Terms: The "Eyes" Have It

We say *chakras* in Sanskrit, but the Quechua term for energy centers is *nawis*, or *naira* in Aymaran. The word translates as "eyes" or "whirlpools," an Andean concept that ties water and vortexes to energetic fields and to the sun. In fact, *naira* also means "eye of the sun." Going a step further, the Incans also perceived *chumpis,* or "belts," girdles of energy surrounding the body, almost like encompassing meridians. Across oceans of time and water, the Incans conceived of the same ideas as did the East Indians.

The Chumpi: Energy Belts

The *chumpis*, "belts," found in the medicine bag of the *chumpi paqo*—an individual trained to open these belts in others in the Incan-Qero tradition—are energetic belts. There are five of them, each characterized by a certain color and set of qualities. Together they surround the body and make up the human energy field (*poq'po*), the bubble around the body. Each of these belts corresponds to one of the *nawis,* or eyes, which are the Quechuan version of the chakras. They are called nawis because they operate as centers of perception and are opened by a paqo's work with the chumpis, which are activated in ceremony through the use of special stones called the *chumpi khuyas*.[59] These belts are shown in Illustration 80.

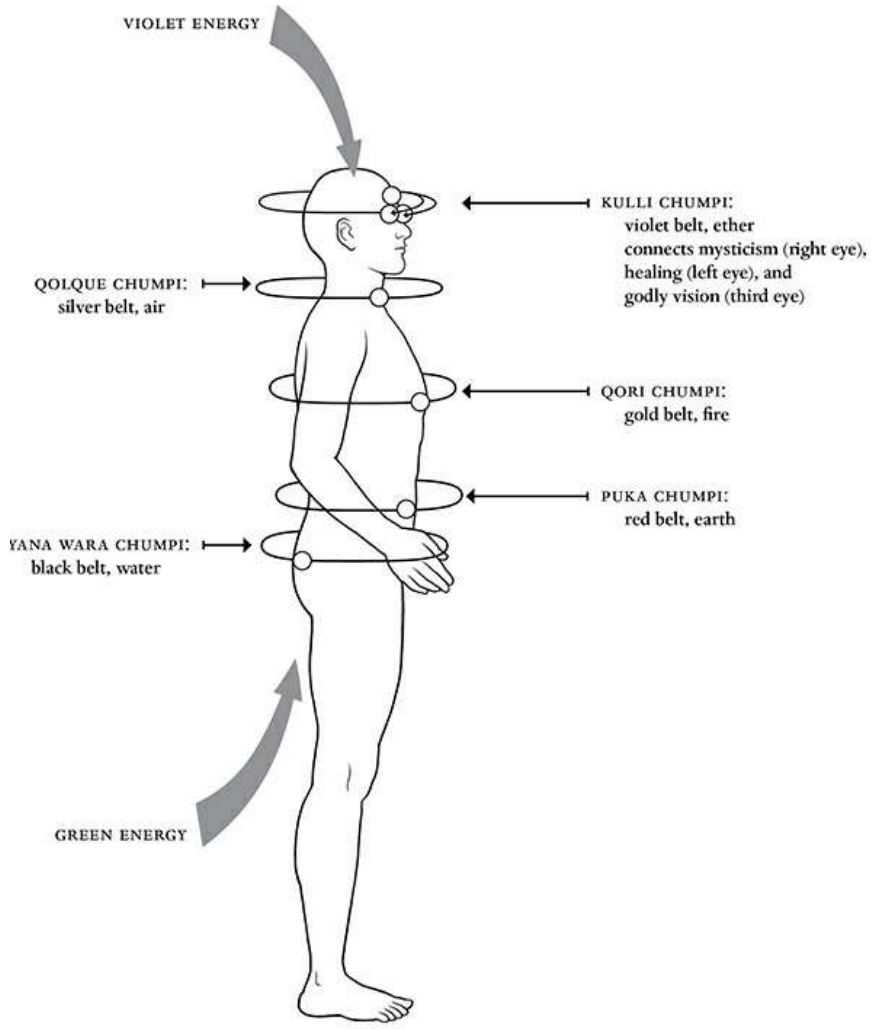

ILLUSTRATION 80—THE CHUMPI ENERGY BELTS: The five chumpi belts link to the seven *nawis,* or eyes, and are cleansed and activated by the shaman (*chumpi paqo*), who

uses sacred stones for this process. These belts are part of a branch of the Andean tradition called the *chupai*, or middle path. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

During the ceremony, green energy is pulled up through the root and violet is pulled down from the sky.

Yana Wara: First energy belt, black, corresponding to the base of the spine and the siqi nawi. Related to water and the flow of our impulses.

Puka Chumpi: Second energy belt, red, linked to navel and qosqo nawi. Related to earth and emotions.

Qori Chumpi: Third energy belt, gold, corresponding to the heart and the sonqo nawi. Related to fire and love.

Qolque Chumpi: Fourth energy belt, silver, corresponding to the throat and the kunkan nawi. Related to air and perceptions of emotions and creativity.

Kulli Chumpi: Fifth energy belt, violet or white, associated with etheric energy and these three centers:

- Phanya nawi, right eye, associated with mystical traditions, communication to the spirit worlds, and energetic connections.
- Lloque nawi, left eye, associated with magical traditions, including applications of healing arts.
- Uma nawi, the third eye in the brow. This visionary eye enables us to see the true nature of God.

EXERCISE: **Activating Your Own Chumpis**

I have created this exercise as a safe way to activate your own energy belts using the natural elements.

Select a day when you can stand outside in the sunlight, near water if possible. If you can't find a site with natural water, bring a glass of water with you.

Breathe deeply and ask that Pachamama, the earth mother, send the green goodness of the earth upward through your spine and that the

Creator above send violet energy downward from the heavens. Now sense your first nawi, located at the base of your spine, and allow it to link with the element of water. As this element fills the first nawi, feel it wash throughout and activate your first chumpi, filling it with the black fluid that will enable self-control.

Now focus on your second nawi in your solar plexus and connect with the element of earth. As this nawi accesses the red earth of the Mother, its related chumpi starts to circulate and ensures emotional receptivity.

Breathe into the third nawi in your heart area while basking in the golden fire of the sun. Let this source of unconditional love flow into your third chumpi, which now surrounds you with enlightening love.

Sense your fourth nawi in your throat and concentrate on the moon as it awaits the passing of day into night. Its silvery beams enter you through the natural breezes and spreads your fourth chumpi around you, enabling you to sense the higher truths of your emotions and creative perceptions.

Finally, let yourself sense your remaining three nawis. Begin with your right eye. The violet-white energy of ether opens the spiritual connections available here before swirling into your left eye, where it activates your magical abilities. Next, the universal energy touches into your third eye nawi, clearing away any misperceptions that have prevented you from acknowledging the Divine's true nature. This force now activates your fifth chumpi belt.

Together these chumpis blend together, forming or strengthening the bubble of energy around your body, assuring you of comfort and protection. Take a few more breaths and give gratitude to the natural world that helped you.

The Incan Pukios Model

Alberto Villoldo, psychologist, medical anthropologist, and author of *Shaman, Healer, Sage*, shares a subtle energy system he learned from his mentor, Don Manuel Quispe—an inheritance from the Inca containing

vestiges of a five-thousand-year-old system that is based on Spirit and light.[60] Through additional studies and travels, Villoldo has catalogued a system revealing that an unending luminous energy field exists in every cell of our bodies.[61]

Composed of light, this field, or *popo,* surrounds our physical body and transfers information into and out of it. It has four layers: the causal, the psychic or soul, the mental-emotional, and the physical. Within this field our personal and ancestral memories and traumas shimmer, with each layer holding memories of each event. This field, therefore, operates as a template for our life.

This luminous energy field mirrors the magnetic field of the earth and is shaped like a donut. Flowing out of our head, energy follows this field, eventually penetrating the earth for about a foot before reentering through our feet. The chakras, which Don Manuel called *pukios*, are the organs of this field.

Pukios means "light wells," another term for chakras, which are also called *ojos de luz,* "eyes of light." From the chakras extend threads of light (*huaskas*) that stretch beyond the body to connect us to the natural world. The huaskas also reach backward and forward in time, traveling from our birth to our final destination.

This particular Incan system showcases nine chakras. The seven in-body chakras are similar to those described in the classical East Indian system, while the eighth is just above the physical body, within the luminous energy field. Called the *wiracocha*, "source of the sacred," it spins like a twirling sun and expands into a luminous globe. It serves as our link to the Creator, who also dwells within us. At death our soul leaves the body, rejoins the eighth chakra, and then returns to the grid pattern formed by the luminous energy field.

The eighth chakra is sourced from the ninth chakra, the *causay*, which lies outside the luminous energy field and extends through the cosmos. Connected to the eighth chakra by a luminous cord, the ninth chakra remains

unaffected by life events. It never enters the flow of time. It is a constant and sacred link to the Creator.

Diving Into The Incan Pukios

The subtle energy system is a pathway to return to the immense force we call God, which manifested from the unmanifested void 13 billion years ago. Why did God separate from the unmanifested but to experience itself? Every being and form in reality contains all features of this force, and each of the pukios enables us to connect with one aspect of this divine being.

The pukios are also considered conduits to the body's neural network. They are clearest when we are children, before we have absorbed negativity, and lose their color and clarity as we age. When they are cleansed they enable a "rainbow body," reflecting all the hues of the rainbow.

The luminous threads (*huaskas)* connect with the environment, including all five sources of energy: plants and animals, water, air, sunlight, and biomagnetic energy (*causay)*. Plants, animal nutrients, and water are processed through our digestive tract, and air through our lungs. Sunlight is utilized through the skin and causay through the chakras. While the lower five chakras accept nourishment from the earth, the upper four receive sustenance from the sun.[62]

According to Villoldo and as I've described in *The Subtle Body: An Encyclopedia of Your Energetic Anatomy*, each *pukio,* or chakra, is linked to the outside world through luminous threads. Each can also be described in several ways, as follows:

First Pukio

Color: Red

Element: Earth

Instinct: Survival, procreation

Bodily Correspondences: Elimination of wastes, rectum, legs, feet

Psychological Correspondences: Food, shelter, safety

Glands: Ovaries, testes

Seeds: Kundalini, abundance

Negative Aspects: Hoarding, chronic fatigue, predatory inclinations, abandonment issues

Second Pukio

Color: Orange

Element: Water

Instinct: Sexuality

Bodily Correspondences: Digestion, kidneys, adrenals, urinary tract, menstruation, appetite

Psychological Correspondences: Power, money, sex, control, fear, passion, self-esteem

Glands: Adrenals

Seeds: Creativity, compassion

Negative Aspects: Fear, fighting

Third Pukio

Color: Yellow

Element: Fire

Instinct: Power

Bodily Correspondences: Stomach, liver, pancreas, spleen, storing and releasing energy

Psychological Correspondences: Courage, power

Glands: Pancreas

Seeds: Autonomy, fulfillment of dreams, longevity

Negative Aspects: Gastrointestinal disorders, anorexia, sorrow, pride, ego, low energy, victim mentality, shame

Fourth Pukio

Color: Green

Element: Air

Instinct: Love

Bodily Correspondences: Circulatory system, lungs, breast, heart, asthma, immune issues

Psychological Correspondences: Love, hope, compassion, intimacy

Glands: Thymus

Seeds: Selfless love, forgiveness

Negative Aspects: Resentment, betrayal, grief, loneliness, abandonment

Fifth Pukio

Color: Blue

Element: Light

Instinct: Psychic expression

Bodily Correspondences: Throat, mouth, neck, esophagus

Psychological Correspondences: Manifesting dreams, creativity, communication

Glands: Thyroid, parathyroid

Seeds: Personal power, faith, will

Negative Aspects: Betrayal, addictions, sleep disorders, fear of speaking out, toxicity

Sixth Pukio

Color: Indigo

Element: Pure light

Instinct: Truth

Bodily Correspondences: Brain, eyes, nervous system

Psychological Correspondences: Reason, logic, intelligence, empathy, depression

Glands: Pituitary

Seeds: Enlightenment, self-realization

Negative Aspects: Delusion, inadequacy

Seventh Pukio

Color: Violet

Element: Pure energy

Instinct: Universal ethics

Bodily Correspondences: Skin, brain, hormonal imbalances

Psychological Correspondences: Selflessness, integrity, wisdom

Glands: Pineal

Seeds: Transcendence, illumination

Negative Aspects: Psychoses, regression, cynicism

Eighth Pukio

Color: Gold

Element: Soul

Instinct: Transcendence

Bodily Correspondences: Architecture of the body

Psychological Correspondences: None

Glands: None

Seeds: Timelessness

Negative Aspects: Templates of disease

Ninth Pukio

Color: Translucent white light

Element: Spirit

Instinct: Liberation

Bodily Correspondences: None

Psychological Correspondences: None

Glands: None

Seeds: Infinity

Negative Aspects: None [63]

EXERCISE: **An Incan Chakra Harmony Rite**

Each of the seven in-body Incan chakras described in the section "The Incan Pukios Model" is related to a particular Andean archetype, a symbol that carries specific powers. The following archetypes can be tapped through the Incan chakras to achieve the listed goals:

First Chakra: Serpent (red), to shed the past and provide healing

Second Chakra: Jaguar (orange), to connect with the earth and ensure no enemies

Third Chakra: Hummingbird (yellow), to note the soul's journey and drink deep of life

Fourth Chakra: Condor (green), to link with God and divine energy; also helps us spread our wings and gain vision and clarity

Fifth Chakra: Huascar (light blue), the keeper of the lower world, opening harmony and order

Sixth Chakra: Quetzalcoatl (indigo), keeper of the middle world, assisting with day-to-day life

Seventh Chakra: Pachakuti (violet), the keeper of time to come, helping us become who we will be in ten thousand years—in other words, once we reach our divine potential

The following ritual, called the Harmony Rite, can be conducted on another person to help them open these archetypal qualities within each of the seven in-body Incan chakras. While conducting this hands-on exercise, you can also help your partner visualize the related colors and suggest that they seek assistance from the Divine with the themes related to the spirit helpers/archetypes.

I have adapted this rite from a version taught to Alberta Villoldo by Don Alejandro Cahuanchi, a renowned healer from the lowland Qero.

It is used by the Huachipayre people living on the edge of the Amazon.

Place your hands on your heart and connect with the Divine. You will carry that energy with you as you help your partner. You will next put your hands on the following places while concentrating on the noted archetype; throughout, keep your left hand on your partner's heart:

- Serpent: Put your right hand over the first chakra, then return it to the heart.
- Jaguar: Put your right hand on the second chakra, then return it to the heart.
- Hummingbird: Put your right hand on the third chakra, then return it to the heart.
- Condor: Put your right hand on the fourth chakra, then return it to the heart.
- Huascar: Put your right hand on the fifth chakra, then return it to the heart.
- Quetzalcoatl: Put your right hand on the sixth chakra, then return it to the heart.
- Pachakuti: Put your right hand on the seventh chakra, then return it to the heart.

Linger on the seventh chakra and help your partner remain in the field of what or who they will have become in ten thousand years.

Return your hands to your heart and breathe.[64]

Andean Chakras: The Nawis in the Feminine Quilagos Tradition

High in the mountains of Ecuador, Mama Margarita speaks of the knowledge of her ancestors. She is a Jaguar Woman who carries the ruling staff in the Quilagos, a feminine legacy of wisdom that has lain dormant and that she is helping to awaken. With the assistance of the fathers (*taitas*) and mothers (*mamas*), she invokes the mountain spirits (*urkus)* to transmit the knowledge of Pachamama.

As she says, if the mountain spirits are not addressed with open hearts, they will stop talking. In speaking with them she is helping awaken energy that might heal this planet. We might all then activate our nawis, our bodily energy centers, to walk the paths of hope.

There are thirteen nawis in this Andean system. The first seven are familiar from the classical Hindu system; the sixth energy center, which incorporates both eyes, constitutes a single chakra. However, there are several additional nawis. Here is the complete list:

First through Seventh Nawis: Same as the classical Hindu chakras

Eighth Nawi: The nawi of light, this energy center links us to *Hanan Pacha,* or the upper world. It is also called the eye of light (*inti nawi*) and is a solar nawi just above the crown chakra. Formally it links us to the central sun of the galaxy, the cosmos, and the stars.

Ninth Nawi: The right hand, which is masculine

Tenth Nawi: The left hand, which is feminine

Eleventh Nawi: The right foot, which is masculine

Twelfth Nawi: The left foot, which is feminine

Thirteenth Nawi: This hidden nawi is lunar in orientation. It is a sensitive eye and able to concentrate vast amounts of energy, working with ancestral memory and the power of healing. When this nawi is linked to the fifth, sixth, and seventh chakras, it forms a divine triangle. This higher triangle creates the balance necessary to attain the upper world and brings together heaven and earth. This nawi therefore represents the equalizing lunar and feminine power that awakens these powers:

- Fifth chakra or nawi, power of the word and song
- Sixth chakra or nawi, psychic vision as well as accurate thinking
- Seventh chakra or nawi, union with the cosmic community

More information about the thirteenth nawi is found in Illustration 81, and the main twelve nawis in Illustration 82.[65]

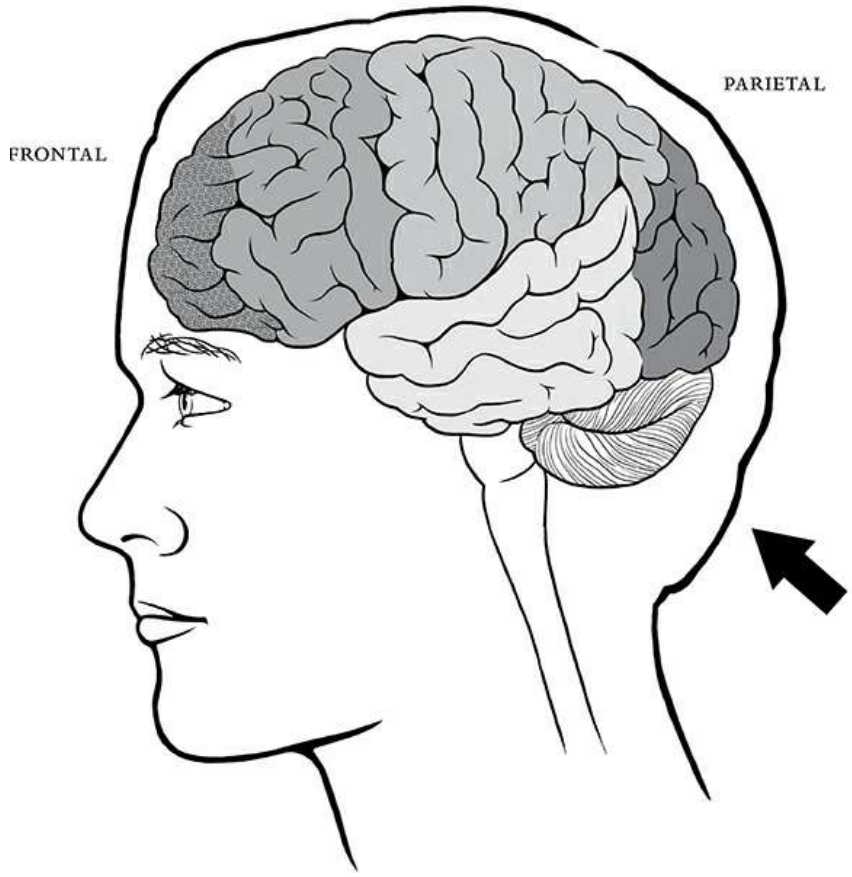

ILLUSTRATION 81—THE HIDDEN THIRTEENTH NAWI: The thirteenth nawi in the Quilagos Andean tradition is important for truth seekers. Physically it is located in a small indentation just under the cerebellum (indicated in the illustration by an arrow). In this Ecuador tradition this area is called *la ollita*, "the little pot," and the thirteenth nawi is inside of it. This nawi is silver, the same as the mother moon. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

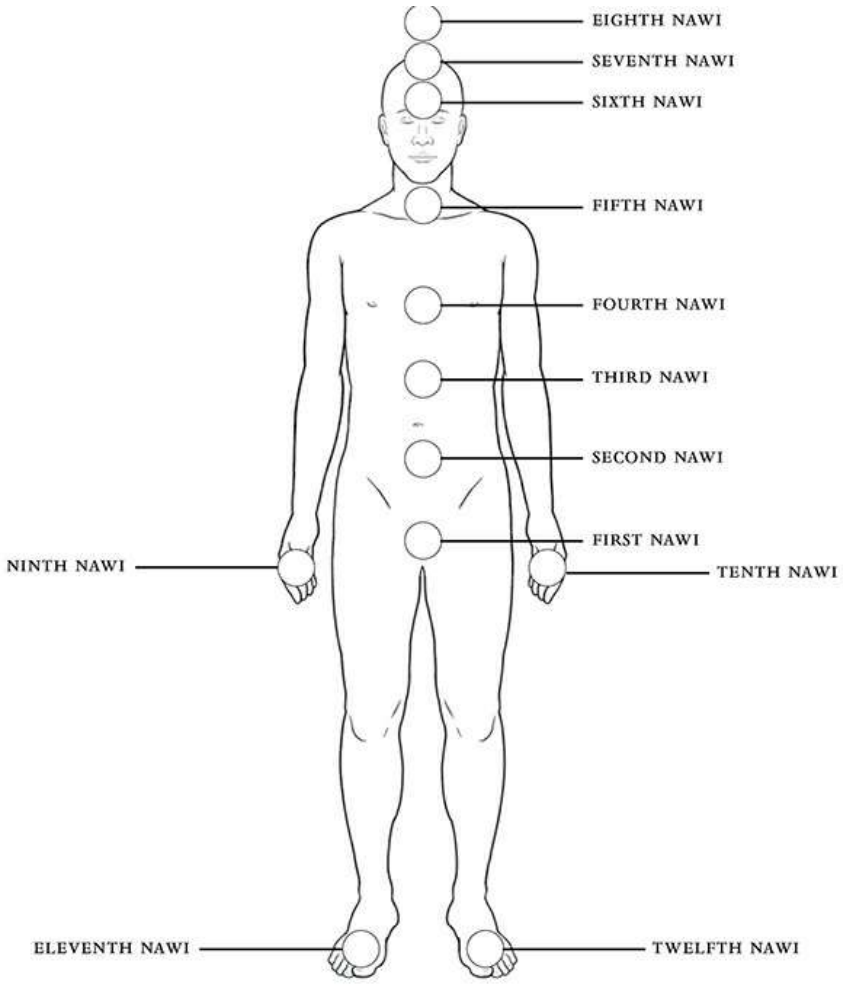

ILLUSTRATION 82—THE NAWIS IN THE FEMININE QUILAGOS TRADITION: There are thirteen energy bodies, or nawis, in the Quilagos Andean tradition. The thirteenth nawi is a hidden lunar nawi and is shown in Illustration 81. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

EXERCISE: **Walking This Good Earth: The Nawis of the Feet**

According to staff bearer Mama Margarita, in the feminine Quilagos tradition each foot represents its own energy center, or nawi. The right foot is masculine and can reflect what is occurring in our masculine self and in the men around us. The left foot is feminine and can signify our feminine self and what is happening in the women around us. Spend a few moments with your bare feet on the earth to feel these powerful energy centers in the following exercise, which I have adapted from Mama Margarita's work:[66]

While sitting, hold your right foot in your hands. In this foot are memories about your own life path but also experiences with your father, brother, male relatives, and particular men. Soothe any painful remembrances with the love of Pachamama, the earth goddess who is mother of us all.

Now caress your left foot, stroking it and smiling over it. What memories of your life to date does it want to share? What in particular do you need to remember about your mother, sister, female relatives, or specific women? If you are in need of comfort or healing, ask Pachamama to provide for you.

Now set your feet on the ground and let them move as they desire—stomp, tiptoe, jiggle, tap dance, and celebrate. Not only your memories but the memories of all your ancestors are alive in your feet. While your feet move as they need to, thank them for keeping you close to your ancestors, and thank Pachamama for reminding you that in walking this earth, you walk upon love.

Know that if any visions need to arise from either foot, they may do so as you dance in gratitude for your life and the lives of others.

Move until your feet become calm, then thank them for carrying you thus far.

We have finished our exploration of the Americas, traveling back through time in North, Central, and South America to uncover beautiful and wild ideas that shine as facets of the chakra medicine diamond. Some of these philosophies and practices migrated from other countries and continents; indigenous people developed yet others.

But there was more to come, as you'll learn in Part 8, Modern Western Chakra Systems, originating in more recent times from multiple sources and creating an intense sort of alphabet soup of ideas.

Eventually, many of the approaches covered in Part 7, as well as elsewhere in this book, continued to develop in Europe and eventually made their way to America. There they either blended with philosophies that already existed

or remained wholly their own. For instance, yoga and related concepts sprang up like saplings in Europe and America, as did an interest in esoteric magic, tantra, metaphysical concepts, astrology, numerology, kundalini, and more. Brilliant movements and minds emerged and helped merge chakra-like ideas, formulating hundreds of different approaches. And so it is that today we have inherited many, many choices in the ways we may interpret and experience the subtle body and its shining stars, the chakras. Now prepare for Part 8, from which you will exit with knowledge of the broad-stroke modern philosophies available today.

[contents]

Modern Western Chakra Systems

I LET MY head fall back, and I gazed into the Eternal Blue Sky…Strange how everything below can be such death and chaos and pain while above the sky is peace, sweet blue gentleness. I heard a shaman say once,
the Ancestors want our souls to be like the blue sky.

SHANNON HALE

Here in twenty-first-century Western culture the term *chakra* appears on makeup labels, in brochures for corporate wellness programs, and in cookbooks and self-help manuals. The word comes up in focused discussions of spirituality and in mundane comparisons of healthcare plans. Today chakra knowledge appears everywhere, like the Eternal Blue Sky above us—an accepted part of our daily existence.

We owe much of our present-day integration of this ancient knowledge to several great minds of the West who have investigated two forks in the road. First, they resurrected the traces of chakras that were already present in the West, from pre-Columbian North and South American philosophies to mystical Christianity to the roots of Hermeticism. Chakra wisdom had already been planted in the minds of Westerners before the actors in this section of the book took stage; it had merely lain fallow for some time.

The other path these actors traveled led deep into the newly introduced Eastern thought they embraced. This knowledge took hold and began to grow, leading to an array of integrated East-West philosophical systems.

Developing these schools of thought took some courage. Consider the devotion of the first Western practitioners of yoga, who were ridiculed by those with more traditional beliefs and who lacked the support of the group classes, cushy mats, and audio and video recordings that are so commonplace today. Think about the early adherents of spiritual development or transcendent psychology whose explorations might have fallen outside their own comfort zones, much less the comfort zones of others. What about the founders of movements that broke new ground, meeting with their new members in basements and other out-of-the-way places? These are the people who have truly linked the past to the present, and we have them to thank as we reap the rewards of working with our own stairway to the heavens, the chakras.

In part 8 I will give testimony to a few of the people who were prominent in modern Western chakra knowledge and to organizations that created an explosion of modern chakra systems. I will also offer a historical review over time, starting with some of the esoteric groups that first blended ancient Eastern and Western concepts and continuing into the modern day. From the Middle Ages onward, chakra-related ideas have been shaped and reshaped, leading to several of the major approaches that are featured in this part.

Chapter 30 begins with an impressive lineup of individuals, including Paracelsus, Christian Rosencreutz, and Franz Mesmer, among others, whose intelligent philosophies birthed “isms” and orders. From this group, which roughly spans the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries, we gather perspectives that have added mathematic, spiritual, and even healing knowledge to our chakra medicine kit.

Chapter 31 is something of a “time out.” We temporarily cease our dot-to-dot chronological discussion so we can focus on a singular movement: the Theosophical Society. This influential Western movement with origins in the late 1800s is a compendium of philosophies from East and West, but it also

forms a unified whole, a system considered “God’s wisdom.” Chakra investigators will recognize many of the contributors, including Madame Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, and Charles Leadbeater.

In chapter 32 we pick up our pace once more and focus on several individuals who lived between the late nineteenth century and the present. We now find chakras coming of age, maturing into the West in such a way that nearly everyone who seeks knowledge of chakra medicine can find it. We visit with Sir Arthur Avalon, discover the ways Carl Jung initiated chakras into contemporary psychology, and move into the New Age, where we find many other chakra inventors and catalogers, including Anodea Judith and Carolyn Myss.

I will explore as many prominent movements and characters as possible, knowing that I am only revealing the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Literally millions of people throughout the West have received, worked with, and handed forward knowledge of the chakras, bringing us to our present-day fascination with these embodied stars.

As you study the work of these masters, whose chakra knowledge is presented in the context of their spiritual views as well as the subtle energy systems they outlined in their work, challenge yourself to watch the progression of ideas. Know, too, that under this wild blue sky of ours there are further insights to come.

We will begin our journey by describing key individuals and esoteric orders, following as chronological a path as possible. These figures were prominent in Western chakraology, while the orders tie together the mysteries of Persia, India, and Egypt, as well as other Hermetic influences that were described in earlier chapters. You can review that material to understand the basis of these mystical and magical orders, which, though seeded in the past, still exist today.

[contents]

Early Western Mystics and Esoteric Orders

> THE TRUE HUMAN being...is the meaning of the universe. He is a dancing star. He is the exploding singularity pregnant with infinite possibilities.
>
> DAVID ZINDELL

Every individual is more than he or she appears to be. We are beings walking in a grounded way on this earth, but we each carry a stellar message with the potential to become a masterpiece. This was certainly true of the early mystics such as Paracelsus and Gichtel, whose profound insights spurred systems and philosophies that still ring true today.

In this chapter we skip through the development of chakra knowledge in the West across a span of approximately four centuries, meeting independent thinkers who could be considered "parents" of esoteric movements that include chakras among their mysteries. Thus we prove the point that though individually we might each be but a singular star, we can all help to birth an entire galaxy of chakra knowledge.

A Profile of Paracelsus: A Mystical Light Bridging East and West

An excellent place to start our discussion of esoterica and esoteric orders is Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1541). Known as Paracelsus, he was a key figure who serves as a doorway between the East and West for chakra-related principles and ideas. Although he didn't specifically name the chakras, the concepts he shared were so similar that today he is considered a vital channel of chakra knowledge.

Paracelsus was a brilliant Swiss physician, alchemist, and occultist, authoring 106 books on esoteric subjects including astrology, healing plants and minerals, cosmology, the subtle anatomy, elemental beings, sleep, dreams, and more. His discoveries were remarkably aligned with Eastern mysticism, although he maintained that his information came from his own intuition and observation. He dictated his writings spontaneously, not from notes, and was said to have been given the "Philosopher's Stone," an allusion to wisdom, from a teacher named Solomon Trismosinus.

Here are a few of his main ideas that relate to our present journey. As you will see, there are parallels with chakras and the subtle anatomy.

- Everything is animate. In ways quite similar to animist communities in indigenous populations, Indian belief in Brahman, and the tantric principle of the bindu, Paracelsus believed that everything comes from one divine source. Stones, plants, animals, people—the only difference is the organic structure; all are expressions of the consciousness of Spirit.[1] As he states in one of his books, *Sympatheticall Mumie*, "No moving thing can be equall (sic) in power with the Mover."[2]
- The human being has two bodies: the visible body, which belongs to the earth, and the invisible body of heaven, attuned to the imagination and spirituality.[3] Here we find the same belief in the material and subtle bodies that is present in Vedic philosophy.
- The physical body is surrounded by a magnetic body or vital envelope Paracelsus called the Archaeus. This force attracts or repulses other forces and potentially calls negative "astral influences" to us if we do not resist them. (In fact, many medieval and esoteric philosophies describe the astral plane or world; I first delved into astral and other planes in chapter 20, and we'll return to the topic in chapter 31.) According to Paracelsus, this envelope resembles a luminous sphere and can act at a distance for good or for bad, either curing or causing disease. He also maintained that

magnets, planets, and stars all had the ability to influence the energy in the envelope.[4] This force is similar to the electromagnetic and auric fields we discussed earlier.

- As well, Paracelsus outlined "inner parts of the body" that could not be seen except through a form of magic perception. He also attested to the individual's ability to send thoughts and healing at a distance and to use powers such as clairvoyance and prescience.[5] Here we find beliefs comparable to tantric, Hindu, and yogic beliefs in siddhi and the chakras.
- Paracelsus proposed a similarity between the macrocosm and the microcosm, just as many tantrists, Hermeticists, and other key groups did. The universe is a microcosm or duplicate of a greater creative effort and is itself a macrocosm or template to our solar system. Man, in turn, is a microcosm of the solar system. We are all one constellation, harmony, and breath.[6] Paracelsus also makes an analogy between the planetary body and the organs inside the physical body. For instance, the moon influences the brain, and Venus, the kidneys.[7] There are similar viewpoints in Traditional Chinese Medicine, other Eastern medical practices, and most systems that are inclusive of the chakras, which are often called "mini universes" that mirror the entire person as well as the external world.

These points illustrate just some of the ways in which Paracelsus formed a bridge between East and West, laying the groundwork for the spread of chakra knowledge.

A Foundational Esoteric Order: The Rosicrucians

Moving now in our early esoteric history from a key individual to a mysterious and pivotal organization, we find many aspects of chakra medicine interwoven in the tenets of the Rosicrucian Order, also called the Secret Society of the Rose Cross and the Fraternity of the Rose Cross. These

facets include chakras, psychic activity, and the existence of several planes of reality. Drawing on the knowledge of alchemists and sages, this order influenced the arts, sciences, religion, and politics.[8]

First, some background. The "Highly Illuminated Father C. R. C." (Christian Rosencreutz), a German who pursued mystical studies in several areas of the Middle East, including Damascus, Damcar, and Fez, started the order in the 1400s. While he was in Fez, Arab magicians taught him how to communicate with the elementals—supernatural beings described in alchemical works. Father C. R. C. then returned to Europe, where he translated a book of mystical secrets called *M* that he had brought back from his travels. Despite being widely ridiculed, he gathered a secret society of eight followers who transcribed these teachings. It is said that Paracelsus, while not a member of the fraternity, was so impressed with the manuscript's contents that he used the information contained in it to become the leading physician of Europe. Most likely, the tenets of the Rosicrucian system perpetuate the secrets of Egyptian Hermeticism as well as the Kabbalah.

As you will see in discussions about Charles Leadbeater in this and following chapters, Rosicrucian ideas about the chakras were brought to the West in the book *Theosophia Practica*, written by German Bavarian mystic Johann Georg Gichtel in the seventeenth century CE. Gichtel was probably a Rosicrucian himself, and his book marks the Rosicrucian Order as a significant conduit of Hindu knowledge.[9]

The Rosicrucian Cosmos

Comprehending the Rosicrucian view of the chakras is best done within the context of Rosicrucian concepts of the cosmos. As Max Heindel, a Rosicrucian and Christian occultist, portrayed in his 1909 book *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*,[10] humans occupy seven worlds, and while these realms are depicted in a hierarchy, they actually interpenetrate, differing in rates of vibration and density.[11]

These worlds were not created instantaneously, nor will they all endure until the end of time. The higher worlds were created first, and the lower worlds

“devolved” over time from the higher ones. Within this framework the hope is that humans and the lower worlds will eventually evolve; then, when they have been rendered unnecessary, the lower worlds will disappear.

The seven worlds belong to the lowest of the “cosmic planes,” which also number seven. These planes are states of spirit-matter that permeate one another. God, the architect of the solar system, dwells in the highest division of the seventh cosmic plane.[12]

The seven worlds where we humans dwell are as follows: the World of God and our highest self; the World of Virgin Spirits and who we were or are before taking the pilgrimage through matter; the World of Divine Spirit and our own divine spirit; the World of the Life Spirit and our own life spirit; the World of Thought and our human spirit and mind; the World of Desire and our own desire, with components including our soul, feeling, passion, wishes, and impressionability; and the World of Physicality, including our vital and dense body. Multiple regions exist within these several worlds.[13]

Two of the Rosicrucian symbols representing the views of the order that relate to the chakras are the rose and the cross. The rose is a flower of Venus that enables transformation. It is dualistic in nature, representing seeming opposites such as earthly passion and heavenly perfection, as well as the desirous Venus and the sacred Christ. Among Rosicrucians, the rose symbol is red and has five petals, with the number five representing a magical pentagram considered to contain the four elements plus Spirit. Famous greats including Leonardo da Vinci employed concepts related to the Rose Cross and these geometric concepts in their work.[14] For instance, da Vinci incorporated the pentagram in his iconic Vitruvian Man figure shown in Illustration 83.

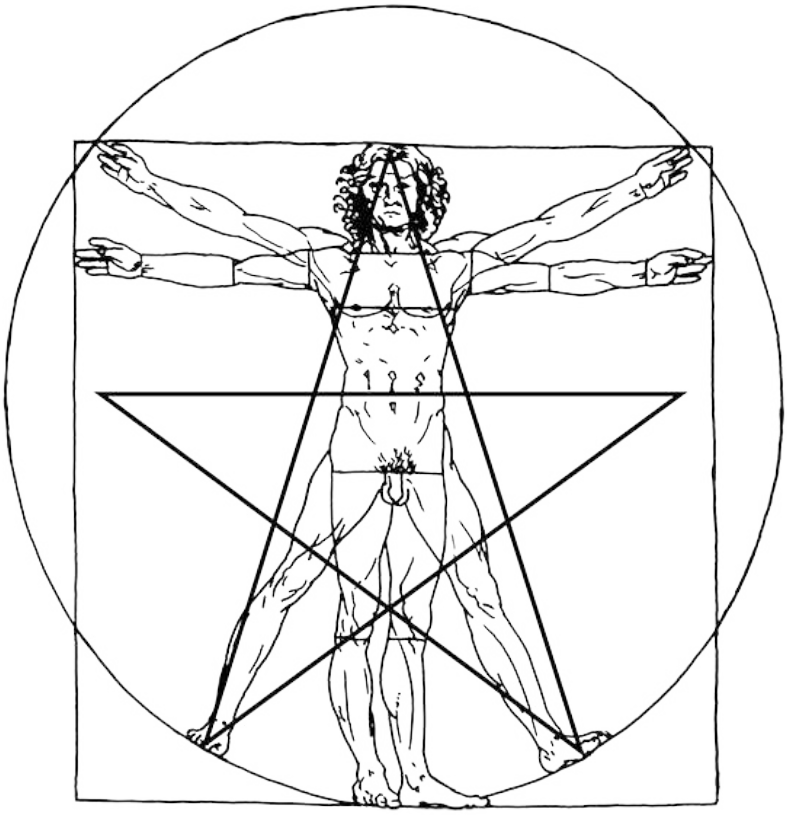

ILLUSTRATION 83—LEONARDO DA VINCI'S "VITRUVIAN MAN": Affiliated with the Rosicrucians, da Vinci illustrated the golden ratio of the pentagram, one of the symbols of the Rosicrucians, in his depiction of the human figure. The golden ratio is also called the divine proportion and phi. ILLUSTRATION BY ELISABETH ALBA

The cross represents the union of polarities and the possibility of transcending from the mortal to the immortal state. It speaks of the descent of the Spirit as well as to the potential ascent of our own spirit. Visually, the rose is attached to the center of the cross, speaking to the soul's journey (the cross) and its goal (the rose).[15]

Rosicrucians believe that we humans can graduate from our physical, anchored state by "removing" the rose from the cross. To do this we must detach from the material world. The nails denote the points of attachment between the material world and our spiritual nature. Through the use of three alchemical rites, initiates can draw out these nails and invite in their divine nature emanating from the cross.[16]

The Rose Cross is also popular among several other esoteric circles, including the Knights Templar, the Golden Dawn, and the Freemasons, and has been referenced by many famous philosophers, scientists, and artists. The Knights Templar, founded in 1118 CE, was a mystical order that incorporated Hermetic ideas.[17] Fighting in the Crusades and supposedly destroyed, this brotherhood likely acknowledged the chakra system, at least according to Rudolf Steiner, a famous philosopher discussed later in this chapter. Steiner says that the Knights Templar had contact with mystical non-Christian beliefs in the Middle East and learned about the chakras there.[18] The Golden Dawn and the Freemasons are described later in this chapter.

In regard to the chakras, it is thought that when the rose blooms on the cross, the chakras are open. When the rose appears as seven images surrounding the crossbeams of the cross, the same is true. An image of this cross appears in Illustration 85 below.

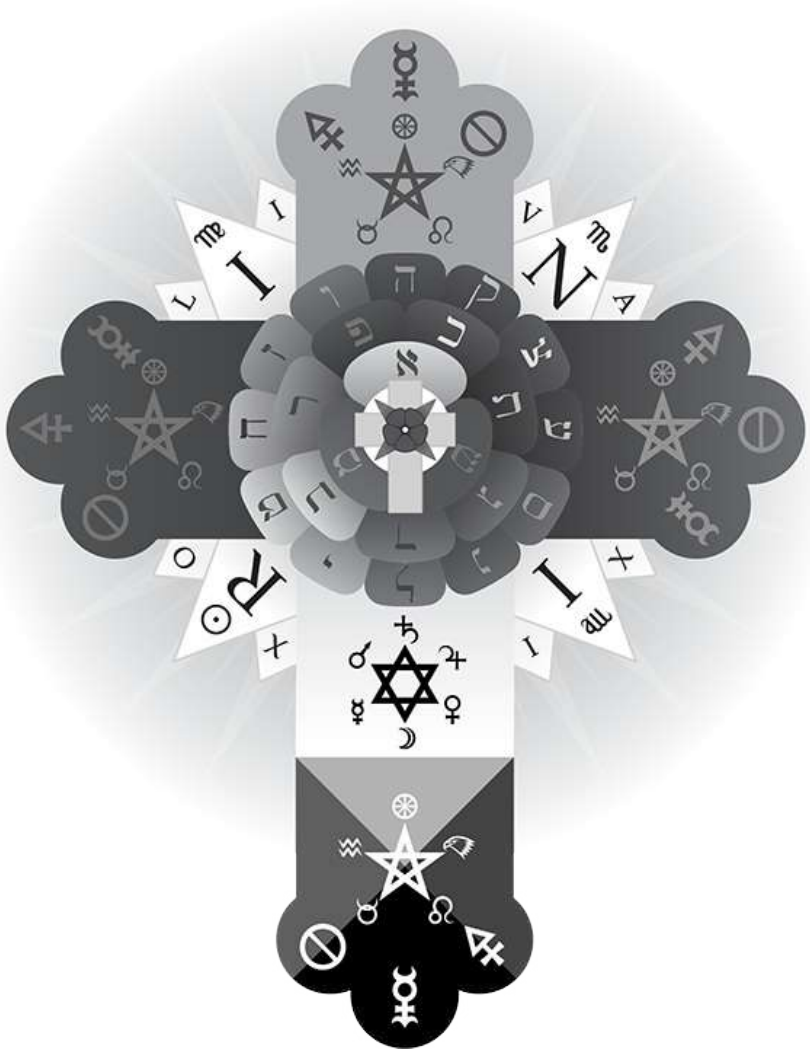

ILLUSTRATION 84—THE ROSE CROSS LAMEN: This symbol of the Golden Dawn is a synthesis of tenets embracing the existence of rays, elements, Kabbalah sephiroth, geometric figures, the balance of opposites, and the opening of the chakras. See the insert for a color version of this image. ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES CLARK

In the Golden Dawn, the rose and cross—called the Rose Cross Lamen—are depicted with a number of rays and symbols. This portraiture is a synthesis of the merging of positive and masculine and the rainbow scale of color (similar to the imagery of kundalini). The four ends of the cross relate to the elements, the white portion to the Spirit and the planets, and the twenty-two petals of the rose to the twenty-two paths of the Kabbalah. This depiction is shown in Illustration 84.

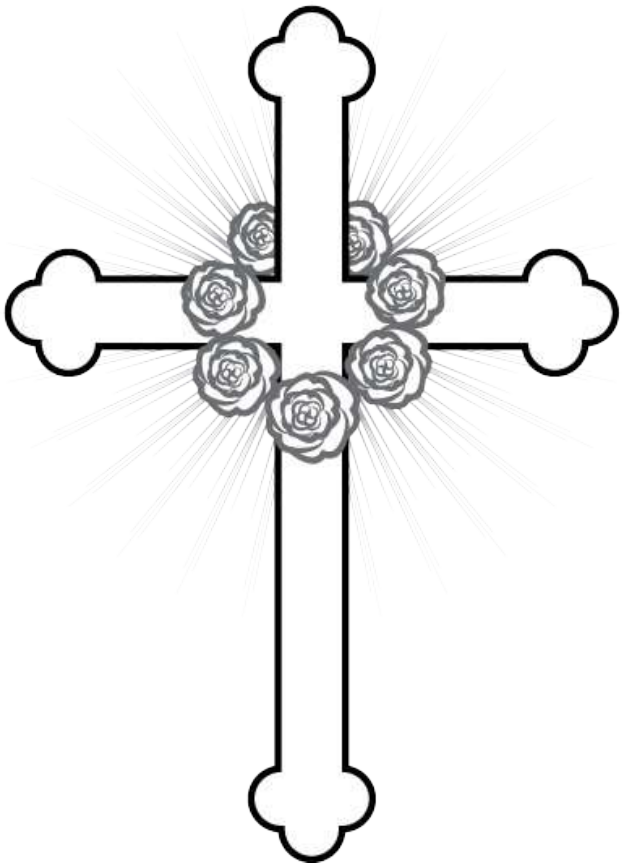

ILLUSTRATION 85—THE ROSE CROSS WITH SEVEN ROSES: Sometimes the Rosicrucian Cross is depicted with seven roses for seven chakras. ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES CLARK

In the Fraternity of the Rose Cross, the Rosicrucian Rose is blended with Kabbalistic philosophy to incorporate the number ten and kundalini concepts. The rose is considered a yoni symbol, and its blossoming is related to spiritual unfoldment. The red color is the blood of Christ; a golden heart, concealed within, is the spiritual gold within the human heart.

The number ten was considered perfect by the Pythagoreans. Ten circles or a tetracys can create a pyramid, each layer also relating to a different sephiroth. An image of the tetracys is shown in Illustration 86 below. Some esoterics, including Rudolf Steiner, embrace the image of a black cross, a symbol of the baser elements and our material impulses and passions. We are to picture seven red roses (presumably the chakras) around the crossbeams of the cross as the expression of the issues we have purified.[19]

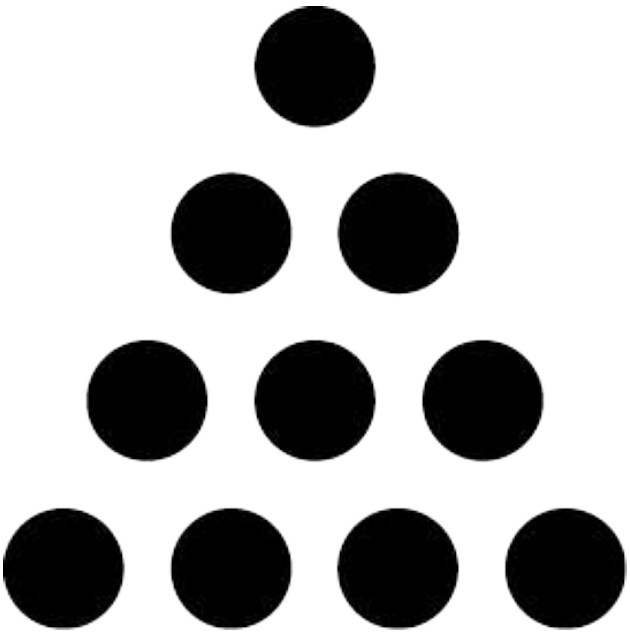

ILLUSTRATION 86—THE POWER OF TEN: In the Fraternity of the Rose Cross, the Rosicrucian Rose is often shown with ten petals, relating it to the Kabbalah. Ten is a reminder of the perfect Pythagorean number, which can be organized like a pyramid, each level containing levels of the sephiroth. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Hindu and Rosicrucian philosophies both begin with the first chakra, related to the earth element and the yellow square. This square or cube can be filled with additional cubes, as depicted below, to form a cube with six sides and a clear rose image. Within the central square esoterics form a cross portraying a male body, its head to the east and arms extended north and south, with a woman assuming a position astride this form. At this point, the female energy or Shakti becomes the rose on the cross of Shiva's body.[20] The rose is commonly compared to the Rose of Sharon in the Old Testament, Sophia (Wisdom), Mary Magdalene, and Mary, Mother of Jesus, underscoring the universal story of Shakti and Shiva in many different storybooks.[21]

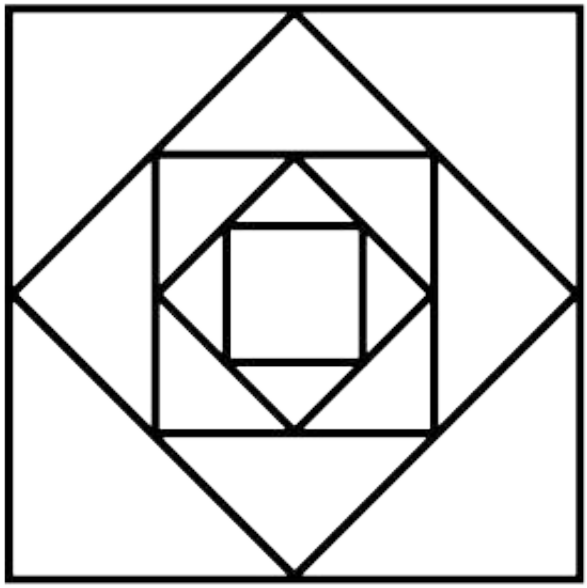

ILLUSTRATION 87—THE ROSE IN THE FIRST CHAKRA SQUARE: The first chakra is associated with a square, which can be multiplied to form the image of a rose.
ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Chakras as Psychic Lamps

One of the Rosicrucian legends about chakras comes from the story of the vault of Father C. R. C. and leads to one of the purposes of the chakras: as lamps to guide psychic activity.

According to the story, brother N. N.—the third successor to Father C. R. C. (after Brother D. and Brother A.) and the head of the fraternity—reported discovering the vault of Brother C. R. C. behind a hidden door. The vault had seven sides and seven corners.

The vault teemed with symbolism—including meaningful depictions of the golden proportion, the pentagram, Jesus and other key figures from the Bible, the Kabbalah, planetary associations, and the tarot. There were also seven burning lamps. Metaphysically these lamps are the chakras, also called the interior stars or metals of the alchemists, each linked to a different planet, angel, and metal, as shown in this chart.

PLANET	ANGEL	METAL	CHAKRA
Venus	Anael	Copper	Throat (fifth)

Mercury	Raphael	Quicksilver	Cerebrum and pineal (seventh)
Moon	Gabriel	Silver	Pituitary (sixth)
Saturn	Tsaphkiel	Lead	Center at base of spine (first)
Jupiter	Tzadkiel	Tin	Solar plexus (third)
Mars	Kamael	Iron	Center below navel (second)
Sun	Michael	Gold	Heart (fourth)

Each of the planetary angels corresponds to one of the seven sides of the vault, a personification of the seven powers basic to manifestation. They are also called the Seven Spirits, whose powers extend through the cosmos.

The meanings of these angels, starting at the door and going clockwise around the heptagon, are as follows:

Anael: Grace of God

Raphael: God the Healer

Gabriel: Man of God

Tsaphkiel: Contemplation of God

Tzadkiel: Righteousness of God

Kamael: Severity of God

Michael: Like unto God [22]

One of the main roles of the chakras, according to Rosicrucian teachings, is as psychic centers. Defined this way, the four psychic centers are located at the heart, throat, pineal, and pituitary—the fourth through seventh chakras.[23] Mark Stavish, the Director of Studies for the Institute of Hermetic Studies and an expert on several esoteric organizations, defines a psychic center as a place where the etheric body allows exchange of energy and information between the subtle psychic consciousness and the rational mind; in other words, these psychic centers are chakras.[24]

Cultivating these four psychic centers is vital. Most individuals are disengaged from their psychic sensitivities and the spiritual world, as the connections between their physical and etheric bodies are too close. It's as if

there is no "breathing room" for Spirit. In sensitive individuals the connection between the two vehicles is looser. It's not enough, however, to simply open the psychic gifts. A person must want to cultivate the gifts. When someone chooses to develop their psychic sensitivities, their intuitive experiences will be positive and life-giving. When someone feels victimized by their gifts—if they are simply "too open" or hyper-psychic—their experiences of the intuitive will be negative.[25] This means that we must actively—and ethically—nurture the gifts in order to encourage enlightenment. Following are a few of the Rosicrucian guidelines for amping up the psychic centers correctly, which you can practice yourself.

EXERCISE: **Living as a Rosicrucian**

The health of our energetic centers is dependent on our lifestyle. Consider living for a week as would a Rosicrucian, then reflect upon the change in your energy levels and mental state.

- Rise with a prayer of gratitude. Inhale fresh air seven times, concentrate on each of the psychic senses before bathing, and then drink a glass of cold water before eating.
- When retiring, give thanks for the day and ask the cosmic hosts to use your psychic services while you sleep. Embrace thoughts of love for all living beings and invite them into the peace and harmony of the universe.
- Before each meal pray over your food, palms over the plate, that the food be magnetized with spiritual radiation.
- Before accepting any blessing from the world, including money, mentally say: "I receive this and pray that it may help me better fulfill my mission in life."
- Acknowledge that your path of mysticism is a portal to helping many and that it is helping you to be a trustee of the cosmic.
- Respect and honor all, help the afflicted, and be of service to the Masters.

- Maintain your home in a way sacred to you.
- Avoid all extremes in thought and action, and subdue your passions.
- Attempt no radical or sudden change in the natural scheme of things. Remember—it is not by revolution but through evolution that all things are accomplished.[26]

The gifts can be further fostered by using the following guided meditation, a version of one offered by Mark Stavish, who found it among the papers of his late great-uncle, a Rosicrucian.

EXERCISE: **Rosicrucian Meditation for Chakra Healing and Prayer**

Use this Rosicrucian meditation whenever you need to cleanse your chakras in preparation for petitioning the Divine through prayer.

- Breathe into your heart and visualize your fourth chakra bathed within a pink cloud of energy. Hold your breath to the count of six.
- Continue holding your breath, this time for a count of twelve, raising the pink cloud three inches over your head.
- Slowly release your breath for eight counts, simultaneously expanding the pink cloud to include your head and upper body.
- While your lungs are empty of breath, hold for twelve counts and visualize the pink cloud.
- Breathe, and then repeat the process. This time use the color blue and visualize it in your throat or fifth chakra.
- Repeat the process again, this time starting the exercise in your pituitary gland or sixth chakra, between the brows and about one-half inch behind your forehead. Visualize a brilliant white light around your head. Now raise it until it is about three inches above your head.
- Counting to eight, release your breath and allow your sixth chakra to join with the center of your head. As they become one, feel the resulting white light brighten the entire room.

- When your breath is expelled, count to twelve and notice the sunlike white light expanding, including your upper body above the waist.
- Relax and sit within this stillness for about three minutes. While doing so, petition the Divine for a need.
- Before you rise, say to yourself, "Let good befall the world."[27]

The Psychic Centers and the Garden of Eden

Perhaps all great philosophies can be allegorically related to the choice between the proverbial two trees in the Garden of Eden: the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. When teaching students I often profess that we define our lives according to the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge. Nourished by this fruit, we exist in a world defined by dualities and the struggles between good and evil.

Our birthright, however, is coded into the seeds from the Tree of Life. Here there is no shame or fear; we are defined by our divinity. The truest of spiritual paths ultimately leads us to this tree—the Tree of Life and of Light, enabling us to evolve beyond duality. Our intuitive senses are key to this enlightenment process, and the chakras are vital to unlocking the yearning to eat of the Light.

In Rosicrucian philosophy the psychic centers compose the rose-covered "way of the heart" and are located in one of three sections of the nervous system: the cerebrospinal system, associated with the objective/subjective phase of consciousness; the sympathetic nervous system, related to the subconscious phase; and the parasympathetic nervous system, with ties into the cosmic phase of consciousness. According to the Rosicrucian philosophy, the subconscious is the essential mind of the psychic

body; therefore, the psychic centers equate with the chakras and must be cleansed so we may evolve. Without opening our psychic gifts, we cannot perceive the tree that illuminates the brilliance of love.

There are a few differences between Hindu and Rosicrucian approaches to this illuminating process, however. The Hindu approach can be said to strengthen the activities of the Tree of Knowledge, with kundalini energy cleansing the chakras and clearing out the subconscious. It's often necessary to rely on external guidance or gurus to enable this process, as it can be so challenging. Rather than focusing on the direct sensitization of the nervous system, the Rosicrucian approach highlights the cosmic knowledge within us all. The formative tenet is that God is within the heart, and we can evolve by emphasizing the harmony between the individual and cosmic consciousness, thus blending the Tree of Knowledge with the Tree of Life. The ultimate guru is the internal God.[28]

By following one's own heart—the Rosicrucian Cross—eventually an initiate experiences this: like a blind man suddenly receiving his sight for the first time, a person born anew sees beauty he never imagined existed.[29]

The Order of the Freemasons

Freemasons, or Masons, belong to the largest fraternal organization in the world, boasting such noteworthy former members as thirteen signers of the Constitution and fourteen presidents of the United States. Famous members have crossed the centuries and more recently included Charles Leadbeater, who wrote a book on the topic called *The Hidden Life in Freemasonry*,[30] and Manly Hall, a twentieth-century expert in Western mystery teachings. Freemasonry embraces chakra medicine ideals as far flung as the planetary meanings of the chakras.

Freemasonry uses ancient architectural symbols and crafts as means to building good men. Its actual origins are hidden in the mists of time, although many scholars believe it was initially a guild of stonemasons who built the castles and cathedrals of the Middle Ages.[31] Some believe it originated in the building of Roslyn Chapel near Edinburgh; its construction began in 1440, and it is believed to be an exact replica of Herod's Temple in Jerusalem, erected around 20 BCE.[32] Others contend that Freemasonry formally started in 1717 with the aim of making God central during a time of great religious strife.[33]

Yet others harken the group back to King Solomon, who, as King of Israel around 1000 BCE, erected the famous Temple of Jerusalem. This original holy temple was destroyed in 586 BCE and then rebuilt for the second time in 516 BCE, after which time it was destroyed again. Herod's Temple, mentioned above, was a replica of the original Temple of Jerusalem built by Herod to gain the faith of the Jewish people, yet destroyed a few decades later. It is said that Herod required the assistance of Hiram, the King of Tyre, whose people were distinguished for their great architectural skills. Many of these masons were also members of a mystic society, the Fraternity of Dionysian Artificers, and they and/or Solomon—possibly versed in Jewish and Arabic secrets of magic—formed the secret society of the Freemasons to guard the ancient mysteries hidden in the temple's geometry and symbology.[34]

Another twist is that the Freemasons incorporated symbols of alchemy stemming from the Hermetic tradition of the Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus. The Egyptians credited Hermes as the author of the arts and sciences. He was also known as Thoth to the Egyptians, Mercury to the Romans, and Hermes to the Greeks. In the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, Hermeticism was linked with alchemy; many esoteric orders, especially in England, were introduced to these ancient symbols, which included knowledge of the chakras, Kabbalah, kundalini, and other instruments of enlightenment. These concepts are alive today in Masonic lodges around the world, often included in initiation rituals called "degrees."[35] The three primary degrees represent the body, mind, and soul

and the process of self-development in all three areas.[36] Many sects, however, present thirty-three degrees, although it is generally understood that the degrees above the primary three are only additional, not higher.[37]

According to Manly Hall, these teachings actually go as far back as Atlantis and are repeated in all great mystery teachings and religions. Regarding Freemasonry, Hall compared the thirty-three degrees to the thirty-three segments of the spine and the number of years Christ lived, as well as to Jacob's Ladder, which connects earth and heaven. These are the segments one must ascend in consciousness to reach the top of the mountain. Within the spine are the seven centers related to seven worlds, and it is incumbent upon us to rise through these centers via the path of the serpent or kundalini to attain a higher state. Geometry serves as the skeleton for this process.[38]

The chakras serve many other vital roles in Freemasonry, some of which Leadbeater explained. Each of the officers in a Masonic lodge represents one of seven master energies, which are also present in the chakras and serve as foci for these higher energies. An officer also represents a specific deva that can actually build a thought form, inviting an outpouring of forces.[39] Leadbeater wrote that the first degree often enables the rising of the ida, or feminine channel, so the candidate can best control his passion and emotion. The second degree invites a clearing of the pingala, or masculine energy channel, to allow control of the mind, and in the third degree the kundalini is aroused so it might rise up the sushumna.[40]

Leadbeater also pointed out that the ceremony of admission into the Masonic Order had three steps: the explanation, the climax, and the actual admission. At the third step the correlated chakra opens and power flows through it.[41]

The Scottish Rite Lodge of Perfection employs many alchemical symbols in the fourth through fourteenth degrees. The chakras play a particularly important part in the twelfth degree, which is centered on the image of a six-pointed star comprising two interlaced triangles. The upright triangle, representing fire, and the upside-down triangle, water, symbolize the unity of opposites. Also featured are a diagram of the North Star and the seven stars

of the Big Dipper, which most likely represent the seven chakras, also referenced as the seals of the planets. The chakras are located in the traditional Hindu placements and are also linked to a planet and metal in this way:

Chakra	Metal	Planet
First	Lead	Saturn
Second	Iron	Mars
Third	Tin	Jupiter
Fourth	Gold	Sun
Fifth	Copper or Brass	Venus
Sixth	Silver	Moon
Seventh	Quicksilver	Mercury [42]

As old as the Masonic magic is, it is kept very much alive through the use of the ancient mysteries, including those of the chakras.

The Early "Easterner": Johann Georg Gichtel

We owe special tribute to Johann Georg Gichtel, who was a student of Jacob Boehme. Boehme was a mystical philosopher who was affiliated with the Rosicrucian movement. A Bavarian who lived between 1638 and 1710, Gichtel had the gift of clairvoyance and could see the seven chakras, which he called force centers, through visions. Correlating them with the sun and planets, he linked the sun with the heart center and the other planets with other chakras.[43]

Gichtel's teachings were adopted by many of the Theosophists, including Charles Leadbeater, who used his visual depictions of the chakras in his own work. Most noteworthy is that Gichtel saw the second chakra located above the spleen, a belief that Leadbeater also held.

Gichtel's cosmology reflects the teachings of Boehme, who catalogued his philosophies in the work *Three Principles and Seven Qualities and Forms*.[44] Boehme's fundamental belief was that the basis of reality is the Abyss, which

contains everything and nothing, like an acorn that holds the potential for a forest of oak trees. Within is the Will or God, which desires only to express and manifest; hence the creation of the universe. As is depicted in so many cosmologies, the Will serves as the Infinite Father with a mirror of the Infinite Mother; together, these dual figures beget a Son.

Boehme laid out three main principles inherent in manifested reality: (1) the Supreme (one principle), which is a unity of two contradictory elements: (2) Fire, which is a compilation of forces, and (3) Light, which represents law and order. Fire is the dark principle of God, representing the unmanifested potential upon which Light must act. Light is essentially love, which brings order into the darkness. These seemingly opposed properties, like Shakti and Shiva, are the creative power of the universe and add up to the Supreme.

Boehme also lists seven properties through which nature operates, which is comparable to the seven tattvas and the lower sephiroth of the Kabbalah. They are the qualities of contraction, or magnetic attraction between things; friction, an expansive force that creates action; sensibility, which creates circulation of energy; fire, which transforms opposing forces; love or light; vital sound; and supreme bliss.[45]

Gichtel adapted these seven qualities to the chakras, first adding a fourth principle to Boehme's three: that of God as Sophia or Wisdom, reflecting the Self to the Self. His goal, however, was to deal with the natural state of darkness man inhabits; he did not comment on the first two chakras but labeled the third chakra as related to anger. In embracing alchemy, he adopted the role of the chakras as vehicles of transmutation: tools for gradually uplifting one's vibrational level. He continued the alchemical views of the chakras as locks, gates, or furnaces of the soul, each of which enables the focus of the three-plus rays coming from the planets.

According to alchemical principles, each planet sends three different rays outward; these rays correspond to the three phases of transformation. The rays are named Sal, Sulphur, and Mercury, and they correlate with these respective phases: Nigredo, which represents blackness and Sal; Albedo, which relates to whiteness and Sulphur; and Rubedo, which is redness and

Mercury. Each chakra is affected by each of these three rays, or phases. For instance, the first chakra is impacted by the moon when in the Nigredo phase; by both the sun and Saturn in the Albedo phase (which often has two parts, a path of contemplation and a path of heart), and by the sun in the Rubedo phase. Metals, rituals, and other processes are used to assist the chakras—and therefore the person—to move from the lowest vibrations to the higher ones. As this occurs, the chakras are attuned to the highest levels of planetary vibrations.

Gichtel was the first to present an all-inclusive explanation of this process, starting from the position that the planets first cause negativity in the soul, in correspondence with Nigredo, or blackness. At this level the chakras are each affiliated with a different vice and receive the following vibrations, all at the lowest levels:

First Chakra: Sal from the moon

Second/Splenic Chakra: Mercury

Third Chakra: Venus

Fourth Chakra: Sal from the sun

Fifth Chakra: Mars

Sixth Chakra: Jupiter

Seventh Chakra: Saturn

An example of the correlated vices is that the heart chakra is related to self-love, the throat is the center of envy and avarice, and the higher centers radiate pride. At this level Gichtel also considered fire as dwelling in the heart, water in the liver, earth in the lungs, and air in the bladder.[46] Unfortunately, much research stops here with the vices, failing to understand that Gichtel also believed the planets can work together positively so vices can be transformed into virtues. This change occurs because of a spiral line that connects the planets and the chakra seals, showing a way out of blackness to whiteness. If one sees this process starting at the heart, there is a

new sequence of planets called the Path of the Heart. It if begins at the crown, it is called the Path of the Mystic.

The planets and chakras associated with the Path of the Mystic on the Albedo level are as follows:

First Chakra: Sun

Second Chakra: Venus

Third Chakra: Mars

Fourth Chakra: Mercury

Fifth Chakra: Jupiter

Sixth Chakra: Moon

Seventh Chakra: Saturn

The planets and chakras linked to the Path of the Heart on the Albedo level are as follows:

First Chakra: Saturn

Second Chakra: Moon

Third Chakra: Jupiter

Fourth Chakra: Mercury

Fifth Chakra: Mars

Sixth Chakra: Venus

Seventh Chakra: Sun

These two paths are still only intermediary steps toward the highest level, that of Rubedo, which is encoded by alchemists in a seven-pointed star. When this symbol is placed on a circle, it is represented by a Latin phrase —*Visita Interiora Terra Rectificando Inuenies Occultum Lapidem*, or VITRIOL—which means "Travel to the bottom of the earth, perfect it, and you shall find the hidden stone." Stones can therefore be considered supportive of altering the chakras and affecting our transformation.

The planets and chakras, as well as the stones, associated with the Rubedo level are as follows:

First Chakra: Sun, Ruby

Second Chakra: Moon, Pearl

Third Chakra: Mars, Yellow Topaz

Fourth Chakra: Mercury, Emerald

Fifth Chakra: Jupiter, Sapphire

Sixth Chakra: Venus, Diamond

Seventh Chakra: Saturn, Amethyst [47]

Swedenborgianism: Representing the Spiritual World

Swedish scholar Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) was the founder of a movement that came to be known as Swedenborgianism, a blend of science and mystical traditions. While he didn't attest to a chakra system, Swedenborg's theology has been considered an important part of Western mysticism, and therefore a steppingstone inviting Western acceptance of the chakras.

According to Swedenborg, all things in the natural world relate to specifics in the spiritual world and are also sustained by the spiritual world. Made in the image of the greatest (God), we are each a "Grand Man," with different parts of heaven relating to different parts of the body. Even after death, asserted Swedenborg, we do not turn into vapor; rather, there is a spiritual body that can communicate with other spiritual bodies.[48]

Fundamental Swedenborg assertions, and their comparisons with some of the chakra-related principles we've been learning, include the following:

- The existence of seen and unseen forces that join to unfold God's plan. Here we find the basic assumption of Vedic and other spiritualities and the existence of subtle (unseen) and physical (seen) energies.

- According to Swedenborg's philosophy of the organism, there is a vital force that "tremulates," or moves in small vibrations, between the soul and the body. This belief is similar to that of prana, and, as we saw in Part 5, is one way to explain the microcurrents that flow in the body creating health or disease; see chapter 22.
- There is an infinite something that manifests as a single mathematical point, which contains the latent energy of the universe. Herein is the idea of bindu, which was most thoroughly explored in chapter 22.
- This latent energy emanates in a circular or spiral fashion and creates four aspects of the cosmos. Chakra and other subtle energies move in a circular fashion, as we discussed in chapter 1 and have since further explored.
- These four constituents are gravitation, magnetism, ether, and air. While Swedenborg's labels of the four forces in the universe differ from spiritual protocol, his ideas are comparable to those of the elements. His theory of gravity as a fundamental energy in the universe is mirrored in the quantum theory featured in chapter 19, which suggests an important relationship between gravity, chakra functions, and zero-point energy. Swedenborg also postulated that ideas are vibrations in the soul and that the human soul is magnetic. Our scientific discussion of how beliefs work and the link between magnetic fields and psychic phenomenon, both featured in chapter 20 in discussions on biofields and auric fields, underscore Swedenborg's statements.[49]

As the gods revealed truth to the rishis of the Vedic tradition, so did Swedenborg serve as a channel for higher forces—in his case, angels. Sprinkled through his texts are narratives about his conversations with the angels, sometimes in dreams and often when meditating, especially when meditating on a single point. His spiritual journey had begun as a child when he noticed, during morning and evening prayers, that by slowing and

controlling his breathing, he could gain inner awareness.[50] Here we find the basic yoga principle of using pranayama, or controlled breathing, to achieve higher awareness.

Swedenborg's intense visions started in 1744 at the age of fifty-six, and he spent his remaining twenty-eight years exploring the spirit world.[51] In one of his works, *Apocalypse Revealed*, he related that one particularly important part of the body is the forehead, which signifies the "good of love."[52] "Good" love is distinguished from "evil love," and it is the forehead that expresses or reveals one's motivation. He asserted that the Lord looks at angels in their foreheads, who, in turn, look at God through their eyes.[53] It is interesting to note that Swedenborg is pointing out the area of the sixth and seventh chakras —which govern vision and spirituality, respectively.

In the same book Swedenborg shares a vision about seven stars and seven golden candlesticks held by the Lord. These images are heavily featured in the Book of Revelation in the Christian New Testament and are, according to Manly Hall, representative of the seven chakras. In chapter 27, in the section "Christian Chakras," we discovered a Christian system linking images from Revelation to chakras, much as did Swedenborg. In chapter 32 we find Edgar Cayce doing the same.[54] Overall, many of Swedenborg's philosophies will be interwoven through the next few centuries with occult, alchemical, yogic, and other disciplines.

Mesmerism: Of Hypnotherapy and Animal Magnetism

Nearly every book about the chakras features Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815), a German physician who left us the word mesmerism and a movement of the same name. While Mesmer did not name the chakras, his ideas continued a tradition of invoking hypnotic or trance states that is as old as the human race and one usually incorporated in chakra-based practices.

Shamans, the priest-healers of a community, have always entered a trance state in order to mediate between heaven and earth. Mesmer coined the phrase "animal magnetism" to describe a universal force that is easiest to access when we are in a trance state. According to Mesmer, this is the

substance that enables us to reach toward a higher reality, access the inner abilities of the mind, and subordinate matter to spirit. As well, it comprises the unseen forces that can restore harmony to an ill body.

Mesmer employed what we would call hypnotic techniques, initially using magnets, to bring about changes in his patients' health. He would also pass his hands over a patient's body, using his own animal magnetism as an energetic force for change.[55] Many modern esotericists theorize that Mesmer's animal magnetism was comparable to prana and that Mesmer was shifting prana so as to clear the chakras.[56]

Homeopathy: Like Cures Like

Homeopathy was a medical movement that resulted in a nontraditional approach to health care that currently embraces the use of the chakras for healing. It was founded by Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843), who observed that disease is an imbalance in our life force, which itself is an extension of a universal spirit called dynamis. Because disease is the body's way of asking for restoration of balance, its symptoms should be supported. If the body "hears" the message, nature will take its course. Homeopathic remedies are therefore made of the vibration of the diseases or maladies themselves. Many homeopathic methods now employ the chakras for diagnosis and treatment.[57]

The Od: Nature's Unceasing Natural Force

Conceived by Baron Karl von Reichenbach (1788–1869), plants, animals, and humans are all affected by a cosmic influence called Od, Odylic, or the Odic force. The Odic force produces a field that is energetic, like a wave, and particulate, like a fluid. According to von Reichenbach, we can achieve health by adjusting the polarities of this force so they are balanced. (It is interesting that von Reichenbach observed that the left side of the body is negative and the right is positive. As we discovered in chapter 25, this is an established fact in Taoism and TCM.)[58]

This Odic force is still referenced among many yogic communities, and in Jain practices it is contrasted with the Actinic force. The Odic force emanates

from our physical body and merges with the magnetism of other people. Actinic force is considered a purer energy, representing the central source of life. Jain meditators are encouraged to learn how to access both forces through the chakras.[59]

The Golden Dawn

Another order that emerged from the Hermetic tradition is the Golden Dawn. It originated in the late nineteenth century, its founders were involved in Freemasonry or Rosicrucianism, and it still exists today.

The Golden Dawn combines theurgy, Neoplatonism (discussed in "The Greek Shoulders Upon Which We Stand" section in chapter 27), Egyptian philosophy, tarot, alchemy, and more. It influenced celebrities, including Irish writer William Butler Yeats and English author Aleister Crowley, and quickly became one of the most important occult influences in the West.[60]

One particular Golden Dawn order, the Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn, offers a path of self-initiation through seven stages or grades. These seven grades are based on the seven yogic chakras, seven planets of astrology, and seven metals of alchemy. A blend of Kundalini yoga, mystical alchemy, and Kabbalistic ideas, it represents just the blend of East and West we've been discussing.[61]

Manly Hall Integrates Chakras Across Time

According to Manly Hall, an expert in Western mysteries, all the great teachings of the past can be integrated. (Hall was born in 1901 and wrote until his death in 1990; we discuss him in this section because he wrote about the ancient thoughts and esoteric orders featured in this chapter.) According to Hall, every great teaching tells the same "once upon a time…" story, and the chakras play a central role. My own synthesis of the points he made in his book *The Occult Anatomy of Man* is as follows.[62]

Hall points out that all priests of the ancient world recognized that the functions of nature and consciousness are imprinted in the human body. We could therefore study the human body to interpret the cosmos, and vice versa.

According to the Mystery Schools, the world is divided into three parts, as is the human body. On top of the world are the heavens, the dwelling of God, and at the bottom is hell, in which dwell the forces of evil. In between, according to the Scandinavians, is Midgard, or the middle garden, connecting to the heavens via a rainbow bridge and the lower world through volcanic activity. In the middle lies Nature. Comparably, the worldly heavens are found in the skull, which passes manna down the spine just as God did for the Children of Israel in the desert. The skull is equivalent to the lotus found in Hindu mystical systems and the "upper room" discussed by Jesus in the Gospel of John, in which we learn of higher truths. Its twists and turns are also comparable to the spans and arches of the holiest temples in the world, which were studied by individuals including the Freemasons. Here, too, lies the imprint of every organ in the body and two embryonic human forms, the yin and the yang, the magnetic and the electrical. King within is the pineal gland, the all-seeing eye that, until the time of Lemuria, an ancient era, enabled the sense of the spiritual world. It is now incumbent on us to turn this organ back on and so gain insight into the true reality.

Linking the higher and lower worlds of the body is the spine, the serpent of kundalini fame. The three canals of the spinal column—the ida, pingala, and sushumna—form a caduceus that points the way upward from the lower regions of hell in the body, the reproductive system. Along the spine are seven chakras or centers that mirror seven centers of consciousness in the brain and seven spirits that stand before the Throne of God, clothed as planets.

This lower world is actually formed from the Logos or God, who descended along the spine into the bottom echelons of the body. He left his fire at the base, which must be returned to the brain to restore us to a higher state.

One of the lower centers, the solar plexus, is said to be a particularly dangerous one, for it is here that we receive the thoughts of outside groups. We must be careful when opening ourselves to these outside forces. Likewise, we must embrace the beauty of each of the lower centers. For instance, the womb, the second chakra, enables us to pass through each of the

developmental stages of life while in utero, appearing as reptile, fish, and less-developed mammals and finally as a full human, revealing our inner nature and evolutionary path. Of course, we share very ancient genes, which are expressing in the womb.[63] Hence we are born by degrees, not all at once.

And finally, we must concentrate on the heart, which lies in the center of the spine, and the rainbow bridge of the chakras. Considered the center of love, the heart is acknowledged as the ultimate teacher and guide.

As does the Trinity, asserts Hall, so do we manifest into a balanced state. Moving from the top downward, each of us is the Father that manifests through our thoughts, the Son created through our emotions, and the Holy Spirit that emanates through our actions. And in the center is God.

Spiritism: Communicating with the Dead

The modern Spiritism movement officially began with the 1857 publication of *The Spirits' Book* by French educator Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, under the pen name Allan Kardec. It is a summation of responses to questions asked of spiritual or otherworldly beings and outlines matters about the spiritual world, the existence of God, and the relationship between spirits and the material world.

Kardec's book, an instant success in Europe, testified to the already-present interest in séances and spiritual matters. The subsequent boost in Spiritism influenced people including Franz Mesmer and several founders of Theosophy.[64]

Spiritism was essentially the study of spirits, or the deceased, and their relationship with the physical world. The basic belief is that humans are immortal spirits that only briefly dwell in a body, and then for the purpose of evolving morally. Connecting with out-of-body spirits through a medium could potentially benefit the living and the deceased. (Many Spiritists also postulated the existence of nonhuman spirits such as angels and devils.) There were many methods for connecting with the other side. Included was the achievement of a trance state using meditation and breathing techniques, and talking boards such as Ouija boards. As time went on, mediums also

employed aura reading, the use of gemstones, and other practices we'd now call "energetic."

You have met a sampling of prominent "modern" esoteric professionals and orders in this chapter, starting with Paracelsus, a sixteenth-century mystic and a bridge between Eastern and Western mysticism. His understanding of subtle energies and structures ushered us into the modern world, where Eastern principles and Western knowledge integrated, forming the basis for what we know about chakra medicine today.

Our tour of relatively modern Western times started with a review of esoteric orders, including the Rosicrusians, Golden Dawn, and the Freemasons, all of which perceive the chakras as stepladders toward higher consciousness. We explored other "isms," such as Odinism, Mesmerism, and Spiritism, proving the point made at the beginning of this chapter: a single mind can birth a unified system that includes the chakras.

Next, in chapter 31, we will look in great depth at a single esoteric movement. Contributing their beliefs, musings, and flashes of brilliant insight, the principal personalities of Theosophy contributed significantly to the field.

[contents]

The Theosophical Society

IT TAKES JUST one star to pierce a universe
of darkness.

RICHELLE E. GOODRICH

Our tour of the early history of modern Western thought will now pause and rest a moment at a very fruitful stopping place: the Theosophical Society, a highly influential group in the history of esoteric studies. The Theosophists could be compared to a single star that pierced the darkness, gathering the bright thoughts of earlier ages together and folding them into a vibrant discussion of the subtle forces of the universe, including chakras.

Russian noblewoman Helena Blavatsky, whom you will read about in this chapter along with other prominent Theosophists, cofounded the Theosophical Society with Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and attorney William Quan Judge in late 1875 in New York City. The society is perhaps the single most important reason that chakras have become a vital part of modern Western life.[1] Encompassed in the society's teachings are philosophies from ancient Egypt, astrology, Zoroaster, Buddha, ancient and modern Greek philosophers, tantra, yoga, Hinduism, Gnosticism, Spiritism, and more.

The society's basic assumptions are that we are all made of the same essence, linked within a supreme deity. This deity is continually evolving, and because of this, so are we. Through the process of reincarnation we are encouraged to seek truth and become students of divine wisdom. In this chapter, which bridges the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, you will meet the Theosophical Society's leading lights.

An Early Theosophist: Helena Blavatsky

Madame Blavatsky—Helena Petrovna Blavatsky—lived between 1831 and 1891. She was a member of Russian nobility who grew up in a time of Old

Russian superstition, among a people who believed in monsters, goblins, werewolves, and ghosts. From an early age she exhibited morbid tendencies and seemingly supernatural powers, and was trained for two years by a Tibetan lama beginning in 1868. As an adult she moved to America and worked as a spiritual medium.

As a result of her beliefs, Theosophy combined elements from Eastern religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, with Western ideas, such as Gnosticism and Spiritualism, holding above all a belief in compassion. Her intensity and dedication resulted in a stack of highly esoteric writings measuring three feet tall.[2]

One of her major contributions to the esoteric movement was presenting a cosmological system based on viewing the universe as an organism composed of innumerable beings and entities interwoven in a cosmic web. Humans entwine with the environment's cosmic strands of life; our thoughts and emotions assist us in meeting a greater destiny.[3]

In her noteworthy book *The Secret Doctrine*, originally published in 1888, Blavatsky outlined a comprehensive view of the universe, drawing from Buddhist, Hindu, and other Eastern philosophies as well as Western and lost cultures in order to present the "secrets" diffused throughout the religions of the ancient and prehistoric world.[4] Alice Bailey, whom you will meet shortly, therefore considered Blavatsky's teachings related to those of all the great adepts: eternal and ineffable. Because of her contributions, Theosophy is based on a single primeval and universal wisdom, which is that all of nature is based on divine nature.[5] Blavatsky laid the groundwork for teachers including Leadbeater, Bailey, Steiner, and others, who postulated many of the same teachings as she, including seven planes of existence, the existence of subtle bodies, and a hierarchy of spiritual masters that guide humanity.

Basically, Blavatsky believed in one single and omnipresent life, without beginning or end (rather like the Odic force). This unseen presence is nonetheless within all of reality, forming the cosmos with divine thought. She relates to this being or presence using Hindu terms including Braman as well as the label of Logos. Her other two vital principles are that the universe

appears and disappears on a cyclical basis and that we are ruled by the law of karma and reincarnation, which governs our soul's evolution. According to Blavatsky, we haven't yet finished our evolution. For instance, we are currently in the beginning of our fifth of seven periods of development; as yet, two of the seven elements are entirely invisible to humankind.

Within this cosmos are found seven creations, planets, elements, prakritis (planes made of primal energy), and races of humankind/periods of humankind, rays, the kundalini factor, and three sets of chakras, among other components. This Universal Logos also emanates seven distinct universal forces or rays, all of which are contained within the greater Logos. Each ray is presided over by a hierarchy of beings and relates to one of seven planets and to the chakras, along with seven principles, colors, sounds, and natural kingdoms.[6]

Blavatsky's universal scheme is extremely complex; it includes seven cosmic planes, the lowest of which is called the prakritic; seven prakritic planes, the lowest of which is the terrestrial; seven terrestrial planes, the lowest of which is called the objective; and seven objective planes, where, at the bottom, lies gross or ordinary matter. One image of her representation of planes within the planes appears in Illustration 88, which reveals the presence of these planes and discusses her views of the seven constitutions or principles of man, which are seven planes on the first objective plane/objective plane, the one we are most familiar with. (There are several planes and subplanes within each of these; the first objective plane is the most physical subplane and the lowest.)

This image of Blatavsky's shows several of the planes she believes exist in the cosmos, although it doesn't reveal the ineffable higher planes, which she did not think could be described. The lowest of the seven prakritic planes, the objective or first prakritic plane (on the bottom), contains seven other planes; several of these subdivide into seven other planes as well. Within this bottom plane are the seven constitutions or principles of humankind, which form their own planes of spiritual development. A description of these, outlined

with the variety of names and descriptions as they appear as in Theosophical teachings, will help you understand what these various planes mean.

7. Atmic—also called para-ego or atma, our pure elemental spirit or higher self, where we are one with the Absolute. Atma is pure eternal spirit; it is Brahman.
6. Buddhic—also called inner-egoic, representing our spiritual soul, which is a vehicle for the radiation light of our atma. (Our atma and buddhic selves create our monad, or purest spark.)
5. Kama Manas—also called ego, where our human soul or ego has mind or consciousness. Individuality exists here.
4. Pranic Kama or lower manas, through which the animal soul, the self without a body, exists. Humans typically sink down from here rather than rise up to meet their higher selves.
3. Pranic Kama or psychic level, through which prana, or life force, flows. This is the energy keeping us in physical incarnations.
2. Astral Body, representing the principle of linga sharira (another name for the astral body or astral double), the subtle, unseen blueprint around which the outer shell of the physical body is built. Through this body our vitalizing prana flows to the physical self.
1. Objective: Related to principle of sthula sharira, which insists that our physical body is merely a shell of the real self.[7]

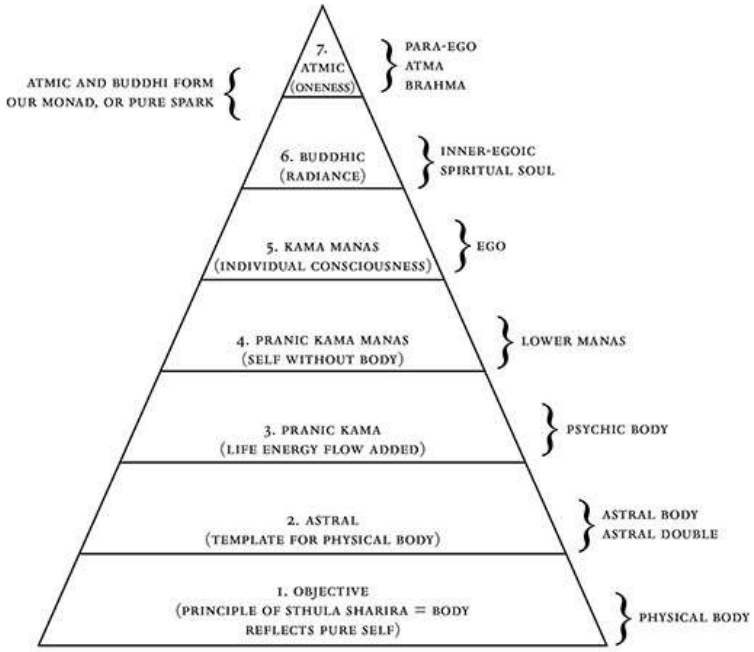

ILLUSTRATION 88—BLAVATSKY'S PLANES WITHIN PLANES: This is my depiction of one of Blavatsky's cosmic planes, which is technically inside the first karmic plane and holds our karmic body. I have added a top atmic plane for perspective and listed other names for these several planes as they appear in Theosophical writings. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Within this context, each of the seven bodily chakras correlates with and radiates one of the seven rays. To Blavatsky, the rays are seen as these colors:

First Ray: Red

Second Ray: Orange

Third Ray: Yellow

Fourth Ray: Green

Fifth Ray: Blue

Sixth Ray: Indigo

Seventh Ray: Violet

As you can see, these colors align with many interpretations of the Hindu chakra system.

By activating the chakras appropriately, an initiate obtains several important spiritual qualities, including absolute selflessness, holiness of mind and body, and a high level of intelligence.[8]

Blavatsky outlines a relatively complex understanding of the chakras to accompany her world-view. The easiest way to summarize her concept is that there are three sets of chakras, or basic levels of integration of human consciousness. Each level enables a different use of energy and can be differentiated as related to life, conscious will, and spirit. Overall, these force centers relate to the nervous system.

On the lowest level, the chakras interact with the sympathetic nervous system and nerve ganglia to transform and distribute energy or enable life, allowing individuation. The second or intermediary level stretches between the base of the brain and the spinal filaments, reaching down into the coccyx. Through this level we learn to integrate with cosmic forces and other souls, transforming our ego and mind. The highest system she calls the "master chakras," and these are related to seven cranial centers. Within this system kundalini rises to return us to the source of all.

These master chakras govern the principle bodily plexuses (named as paryngeal, laryngeal, cavernous, cardiac, epigastric, prostatic, and sacral) and forty-two minor chakras, which she doesn't name. Blavatsky asserts that at the correct time, humans will be given exact details about these master chakras and how to use them. Related to the chakras is the auric egg, which reflects every thought and quality with corresponding colors that can be intuitively sensed, heard as sounds, or felt.[9]

The "Soul" Theosophist: Alice Bailey

Born in 1880 and living until 1949, Alice Bailey was an early member of the Theosophists whose occult writings presented a unified theory of the soul's development. Many of these works are attributed to a partnership with a spirit, Djwhal Khul, an otherworldly Tibetan being. Her multiple works outline an intricate relationship between layers of reality, rays, chakras, and kundalini.

Bailey's Energetic Universe

In an energetic context, Bailey believed that nothing exists but energy, a substance that permeates reality like ether. This substance is simultaneously subtle and highly dense and has positive and negative charges. These oppositional charges galvanize energy and provide coherency, allowing the emergence of material reality.

Like so many esoteric professionals, Bailey equated life with positive electricity and form with negative activity, the former being dynamic and the latter being static. From these two arises a third energy, a field of activity that unifies life and physicality. Matter can now be seen as Spirit that is descending and debased, and Spirit can be seen as matter that is ascending and glorified. Consequently, all forms have an etheric form, or body, and just as every atom has positive and negative aspects, so does the etheric body.

Another way Bailey phrased this idea was to assert that there is one boundless immutable principle or reality with three aspects of form: positive energy (Father), equalized energy (Son/Love), and negative energy (Spirit). These three aspects appear in the solar system, human being, and atom. Likewise, we ourselves have three aspects: the monad or spirit, the ego or soul, and the personality or body-self. The three aspects of God manifest through the seven centers of force, or chakras, that are present in the human etheric body. These centers are numbered from top to bottom to emphasize the point that we should manage our lives according to the principles in the head.

As it takes on density, energy descends into seven degrees or planes, which are also composed of seven subplanes. At this time humans only function in the physical, emotional (astral), and mental planes, though we are on the threshold of awakening our soul or achieving "at-one-ment" with our higher nature, a stage that begins on the buddhic level. Discrete steps on this path are called initiations. Besides having an etheric counterpart, every energy layer or body is made up of its own unique energy. For instance, as I'll share, the physical plane consists of cosmic dense energy. Within this substance are also three subtypes of dense energies and four layers of etheric energy.

Moving up a level to the astral or emotional vehicle, we discover cosmic gas, and in the mental plane, cosmic liquid. As we shift upward, various types of cosmic ether form the basis of the next planes. The cosmic ether of the higher planes is also present as a level of ether in the physical plane.

These seven planes, from highest to lowest, are the divine, also called the adi, plane of the logos, and the first cosmic etheric; the monadic, or anupadaka and second cosmic etheric; the spiritual or atmic and third cosmic etheric; the intuitional or buddhic and fourth cosmic etheric; the mental or manasic and cosmic gaseous; the emotional or astral/kama and cosmic liquid; and the physical or cosmic dense.[10] The aspirant seeking to reach their potential has several goals: to transmute their threefold lower nature (which is embodied in three triangles organizing the body's energy centers), to develop self-knowledge, to equip the mental body, to build the mental body through good deeds, and to serve their species. This pilgrimage involves ascending through the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms to the superhuman or spiritual kingdom, developing consciousness on five planes or through five vehicles or sheaths: the physical/etheric, astral, mental, buddhic, and spiritual. After these two lie the monadic and the divine planes, which further an initiate's spiritual aspects.[11] A brief description of the way Bailey sees these planes, which she considers interwoven paths for soul development, is as follows:

Dense Physical Body/Etheric Body: Instrument of the indwelling spirituality that attaches us to life on this planet. We mature on this plane by employing our ego to master the physical body and assuage physical temptations in lieu of righteousness.

Etheric Body: (Technically, Bailey establishes the etheric body as part of the first plane, the dense physical plane or body. However, it is a vitalizing, energizing agent for the entirety of a human, and etheric energy exists on every plane. I have separated it out so we can better discuss its specific roles.) Also called the vital body, the etheric body vitalizes and energizes the physical body through a web of energy

streams, lines of force, and light. This body is part of a network of energies that create all of life. Succinctly, the etheric body is:

- The mold of the physical body
- The archetype for all physical forms
- A web of fine channels made of four ethers that produces the movement of atoms
- The layer that emanates prana to affect dense matter, also receiving, assimilating, and transmitting prana
- A barrier between the physical and astral body, which can only be transcended with higher consciousness
- Composed of four etheric subplanes and denser physical levels

Astral Body: Also called the desire or emotional body/plane. This body is a result of the interactions between our desires and the senses. It is known through emotion, pain, pleasure, and the concept of duality. About 90 percent of most physical maladies are due to problems in the etheric and astral bodies. We graduate from this level when we embrace the values of service, love, and progress.

Mental Body: Also called the causal plane, the mental body is made of *chitta*, a mind substance that comprises our thinking. On this plane we learn to manipulate matter and employ the laws of creative thought building. The mastering of all layers of the mental body is sometimes called the transfiguration because the personality is flooded with light. Bailey suggests that only about 5 percent of all illnesses start in the mental body, although modern body-mind proponents would estimate otherwise. Rather, she believes that mental diseases are really caused by diseases of the brain, disorders of the solar plexus, astral domination, premature clairvoyance and clairaudience, obsession, absence of mind, and soullessness.

Buddhic: Also called the intuitional plane, this plane is the place of union or at-one-ment of the soul. Once here, an initiate can direct the

activities of cosmic beings and develop their own spiritual nature. This level is achieved only after one masters all the five lower subplanes of the physical, astral, and mental planes and can function on the two lower subplanes of the buddhic plane. Technically, this is the fourth cosmic ether plane.

Spiritual: Also called the atmic plane, this plane establishes the third subplane of the etheric and is an atomic plane. It is here that we surrender to spiritual will.

Monadic: Also called the anupadaka or the akasha plane, this body establishes the second subplane of the etheric and is subatomic. It relates to the atman, or the unity that underlies all parts of the self. The monad is the highest principle in a human and expresses through lower vehicles such as the body.

Divine: Also called the adi plane, this arena sets up the first subplane of the etheric. Here there are no distinctions of polarities, simply unity.[12]

Within this cosmic system there are numerous other "factors of seven," or energies affecting our growth. For instance, there are seven rays that shape the evolution of humankind. On the cosmic level they are the creative energies of the planets and stars. On the micro level they support the physical, psychic, and spiritual makeup of humans. Each of these rays is also embodied in a rishi, or lord, and focuses energy through groups of humans, cities, nations, and the chakras themselves. Each of the rays constitutes the subject of one of the seven initiations or wisdom teachings that a soul must pass through in order to evolve. For instance, the first initiation involves incorporating the teachings of the first ray into one's life, the second initiation is based on the second ray, and so on. The rays are described in the following exercise in a way that allows you to employ the rays while learning about them.

As if the energy constructs Bailey conceived and described were not complex enough, she also incorporated the seven rays into an unconventional form of astrology.

EXERCISE: **Healing Techniques Using the Rays**

Bailey suggested that each ray was the subject of a corresponding initiation that could be encapsulated in the form of a statement. If you are intrigued by Bailey's system, you can use the following statements for each ray to help embrace and integrate its power in your life. Also included are the chakras that are best employed with each ray, if applicable.

The First Ray—Will or Power: Let the dynamic force come to my aid, descending into the third chakra before passing into the fifth chakra and focusing on the seventh.

The Second Ray—Love or Wisdom: Let this healing energy carry its dual lines of life and magnetic force, supplementing what is in the seventh chakra and matching chakras four and six to three and seven, but not dealing with five, thus creating a circular vortex.

The Third Ray—Active Intelligence: Let energy be gathered from chakras three, five, and seven to serve the heart of life, creating a vortex that will enable an angel to descend into the pool of distress and bring healing.

The Fourth Ray—Harmony: Let the healer bring forth the sound that is needed to provide healing.

The Fifth Ray—Knowledge: Let that which is hidden be seen so that all aids are brought about to a cure.

The Sixth Ray—Devotion: May power descend into every channel, nadi, and throughout the physical body and confront any enemies.

The Seventh Ray—Organization: May energy and force meet each other and bring all work into fruition so that I can meet my destiny.[13]

Bailey and the Chakras: Centers of Force

On the most basic level, Bailey described the chakras as seven centers of forces that lie within the etheric or vital body. Chakras exist where the etheric lines of force cross each other—where great streams of energy meet. There

are seven such major centers, twenty-one lesser or secondary centers, and forty-nine smaller centers.

All chakras are fundamentally charged with helping the soul express and develop. Mainly, they deal with the fire aspect of the divine spirit and serve as points of contact for the soul in the physical body. They transmit life force, act as agents for the soul's needs, maintain our bodily existence, and enable physical activity.

At a deeper level, the chakras connect us to the monad, or spirit self (as well as the "Great Monad," or God), which can access divine force. Energetically, this force originates in the cosmic mental levels, which initiate the impulse to incarnate in the physical world. It then descends to the cosmic astral level and finally to the fourth cosmic etheric level, where it goes through the same evolution as the planets do and finally segregates into the force centers. Over time, the hope is that our chakras materialize as brilliant bodies of fire that continue to shine as seven brilliant centers until our very form disappears, as we no longer require a dualistic existence to learn from.

In the meantime, our chakras carry pranic energy in close relation to the nervous system divisions: the cerebrospinal, sympathetic, and peripheral systems. This pranic energy is also distributed through the nadis, which Bailey related to the nerves and the arteries, stating that the nadis underlie the corporeal nervous system but are luminous rather than concrete. She also noted that there could be upward of 720 million nadis, although the numbers describing the nadis are symbolic, not actual. Within the backdrop of the chakras, the nadis are small threads of energy or force fibers that radiate out from every part of the network and underlie the entire nervous system.

Bailey's chakra locations are traditional. I have described them as she does, culling information from many of her writings to list her system of locations, Hindu names, the related glands, the related rays, the origin in the planes (if applicable), and additional information. (Note: Some of her writings place the rays in other chakras; I have selected her most popular writings.)

Head Chakra: Sahasrara chakra (seventh), pineal gland, first ray, monadic origin, and responsible for distribution of monadic energy or the will of God. During life this chakra helps us register our divine purpose.

This center has two divisions. One lies between the eyebrows and has two petals, which spread like the wings of an angel to the left and right sides of the head. It also has ninety-six lesser or minor petals, half of which are rose and yellow and half of which are blue and purple. The division on the top of the head has twelve major petals that are white and gold, and 960 secondary petals arranged around the central twelve. Within the crown chakra are seven other centers that are divided into three major and four minor centers.

The stem of the lotus is called the *antakarana,* or the rainbow bridge, which enables us to access higher consciousness. Interestingly, when we achieve liberation, this lotus retains the position of an inverted lotus; all other lotuses turn upward at enlightenment. It is closely associated with the first chakra.

Chakra Between the Eyebrows: Ajña chakra (sixth), pituitary gland, seventh ray, atmic origin. This chakra helps us express our integrated personality.

Throat Chakra: Vishuddha chakra (fifth), thyroid gland, fifth ray, mental origin. Empowers the creative world and brings the energies of humanity into our consciousness. This chakra is actually located at the back of the neck, reaches up into the medulla oblongata, incorporates the carotid gland, and then moves downward toward the shoulder blades. This chakra becomes vitally important when the aspirant shifts from the second chakra to the throat; at this point, the sixth chakra forms the antakarana (rainbow bridge).

In relation to these top three chakras, Bailey believed there are three forms of sight. Our third eye relates to the seventh chakra and the eye of the Father or the Monad and actualizes through the pineal gland. Our

right eye relates to the eye of the Son or our soul and the sixth chakra, as well as to the pituitary gland. Our left eye is the eye of the Mother and our personality. It is also related to the carotid gland for actualization and the fifth chakra. When all three are completely functioning, we have full insight into divine purpose.

Heart or Cardiac Chakra: Anahata chakra (fourth), thymus gland, second ray, buddhic origin. This center is the spiritual source of light and love and deals with the mastery of the emotional body and control of desire. Once we are initiated, the lower self is transmuted with love and we can learn with the heart, not only think with the mind.

Solar Plexus Chakra: Manipura chakra (third), pancreas, sixth ray, astral origin. This center is the organ of integration and synthesis with higher ideas. Ultimately we must send solar plexus energy into the higher chakras through three transfers:

- From the lower three chakras into the heart, throat, and third eye
- From the heart and throat into the third eye and crown
- From the third eye into the crown; this transfer now completes the unification of energies through the entire etheric body

Sacral or Sexual Chakra: Svadhisthana chakra (second), gonads, third ray, etheric origin. This chakra is the source of the antakarana (rainbow bridge) as the creative agent. It is connected with the sexual impulse, and it is here that we resolve the problem of dualism. When linked with the seventh chakra, this chakra allows our true personality to emerge.

Base of the Spine Chakra: Muladhara chakra (first), adrenal glands, fourth ray, physical origin. Supports all other chakras as the meeting ground of Spirit and matter. Here the serpent of God—kundalini—lies coiled. As it rises, it is transformed into the serpent of wisdom: "dragon of living light."

All chakras are equally important in that they hold the body together, creating cohesiveness. However, certain chakras are considered especially

important. For instance, the soul is seated in the heart and holds our "life thread," which keeps us alive. Our seventh chakra is also vital as it reflects our rational consciousness and what is called our "consciousness thread," which promotes higher states of awareness. At death the consciousness thread withdraws from the seventh chakra and the life thread withdraws from the heart. These threads now record all the information from every energy center. When they exit through the head, they are drawn into the soul body, which can now carry the essence of every chakra with it.[14] Yet another way to highlight certain chakras is to emphasize the most essential of them. The fourth chakra is vital because it governs our physical heart and our life principle. Within it lies our spiritual aspect. The seventh chakra manages our brain and houses our soul aspect, which underscores our consciousness. And one of the secondary chakras discussed in the next section is equally dynamic. This is the spleen chakra, which manages prana and the very matter of life.[15]

of triads and kundalini afire

Fiery kundalini is just one of many different types of fire in our various bodies or sheaths. For instance, in the lower part of the body burn fires of the lower nature. In the etheric body is the vehicle of prana. Fire emanates from everything and everywhere, including the sun, earth, spirits (including elemental spirits), and all aspects of reality.[16]

From Bailey's perspective, a kundalini activation is a product of the connecting of the fourth and first chakras through the vagus nerves. When these two centers are brought under the soul's control through the brahmarandhra (a Hindu name for the slight gap between the top of the spine and the skull), the result is the raising of kundalini. This rising swings the nervous system into a rhythmic flow. Now the kundalini actually controls the vagus nerve. The fires of the body begin to purify the body and open the chakra doors.

Kundalini serves several "enflaming" purposes that include ignition of the chakras—and so much more. Lying at the base of the spine, it animates the

body. As it rises, it increases the vibratory rate of each center and every atom in all the bodies, including astral, etheric, and mental. It eliminates toxins and coarse matter and purifies the etheric web, eventually destroying the web for continuity of consciousness.[17] It also vitalizes and then blends three triads or channels of energy: energy bodies that are conjoined in three triangular shapes that lie within the etheric spine. These triads are made of many of the traditional chakras but also a couple of the secondary chakras.

The three triads are the head triad—a triangle that when purified by the kundalini is composed of the pineal gland, pituitary body, and alta major center; the triangle of prana etched between the shoulders, above the diaphragm, and the spleen; and the base of the spine, connected between a point at the bottom of the spinal column and the two major sex organs in the male and female. As the kundalini passes up, it eventually radiates physical fire between the shoulder blades, a fire which, if it continues to rise, blends with the manasic fire and unites the three centers in the head. (The manasic principle is the process of becoming active and aware through several stages of development. The stages are called manas. The manasic fires are various fires of instinct, mind, and more that help purify the mind or become purified themselves as we develop.) The higher chakra centers in the body now activate fully and attract the downward flow of Spirit. As well, the rapport between the three main triads affects the vagus nerve, a vital part of the kundalini rising, and all bodily fires are unified and raised. The chakra doors are now fully open.[18]

The alta major center relates to the throat center. It is associated with the autonomic nervous system, and its inflow point lies at the brahmarandhra, mentioned earlier. Its outflow point is on the hairline at the front. The carotid gland is also associated with the alta major. As is explained by esoteric author Judy Jacka, who works with the alta major—a center only mentioned in Alice Bailey's work—disturbance in this center usually results from a lack of balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic parts, which often occurs when we push ourselves too hard. One of the consequences is hyperactive adrenal glands.[19] Together, the three physical centers of the head

—the alta major, pineal gland, and pituitary body—also subdivide into four lesser centers in the alta major.

The spleen center is another secondary chakra. It is the most important agent of the life force present in matter itself, independent of form.

During the kundalini rising, the chakras eventually shift from "flat-lined" to two-dimensional and eventually multidimensional. As they evolve, their appearance changes, as Bailey describes:

Circle: A saucerlike depression of dimly glowing light. The wheel rotates slowly. This is the least developed stage, close to animalistic.

Circle with a Point in the Center: The center is a glowing fire in the middle of the depression, and the rotation is more rapid. The mind is becoming active.

Divided Circle: The point of light in the center is active, the center of the vortex is moving, and the rotation causes a bright flame that casts off rays of fire in two directions. This movement appears to split the vortex in two.

Circle Divided in Four: The center is active and the cross within its periphery rotates, as does the wheel, forming a beautiful shape indicative of high mental development and the ability to sense the spiritual.

Swastika: The center is four-dimensional, featuring an inner rotating cross turning on its axis, driving the flaming periphery to also turn on its axis and create a sphere of light. The center has globes of radiant fire with the spokes merging and blending.

As the chakras evolve, so do our senses. Each of the planes is associated with a different one of the five physical senses. For instance, the physical plane relates to hearing, the astral to touch, the mental to sight, the buddhic to taste, and the atmic to smell. These senses heighten as we increase our capabilities of functioning on each plane. As a person matures on each plane, extrasensory capabilities become more available according to the plane. The

five senses become stronger on the physical plane, while on the astral plane we experience increased clairaudience, clairvoyance, and emotional idealism. The mental plane relates to higher clairaudience, planetary psychometry, discrimination, and spiritual discernment; the buddhic to comprehension, healing, divine visions, and intuition; and the atmic to active services, perfection, all knowledge, and beatitude.[20]

alice and the extra chakras

According to Alice Bailey, there is a web of twenty-one auxiliary or minor chakras located all over the body. These are grouped as ten bilateral minor chakras corresponding to the foot, hand, knee, elbow, groin, clavicles, navel, shoulder, and ear. They are about three inches in diameter and one inch away from the body. Barbara Ann Brennan, a healer featured in chapter 32, believes that these exist where there are fourteen energy crossings. In addition, there are forty-nine even smaller chakras that exist, according to Brennan, where the energy strands cross only seven times. These might correspond to acupuncture points.

Bailey's secondary chakras are located at these points:

- Two in front of the ears where the jaw connects
- Two below the breasts
- One where the breastbones meet, close to the thyroid; with the two breast centers, these chakras form a triangle of force
- Two in the hands (one in each palm)
- Two in the feet (one in each sole)
- Two just behind the eyes
- Two connected with the gonads
- One close to the liver
- One connected to the stomach (related to the solar plexus but not identical)
- Two connected to the spleen, which form one center caused by the superimposition of these two chakras

- Two at the knees (one at the back of each)
- One linked with the vagus nerve, close to the thymus gland
- One close to the solar plexus that makes a triangle with the second and third chakras and the base of the spine [21]

Charles Leadbeater: Theosophical Giant

An influential Theosophist, Charles Leadbeater has been called the original Western authority on the chakras. In his book *The Chakras* [22] and in sixty-nine other works, he outlined a chakra system that was nearly identical to the classical Hindu system, yet contained his unique interpretations.

Leadbeater, born in 1854, joined the Theosophical Society in 1883 and worked for it until he died in 1934. Leadbeater's works outlined the phenomena of the paranormal aspects of life, such as the various planes of existence, the use of clairvoyance, and a seven-chakra system that slightly differs from the Hindu norm.

Leadbeater was also identified with several other important Theosophists. His own work drew heavily on that of John Woodroffe, whose book *The Serpent Power* we have already discussed. As well, Leadbeater partnered with fellow Theosophist Annie Besant, co-authoring material about occult chemistry and thoughtforms. As time went on, both Leadbeater and Besant—a natural clairvoyant, author, reformist, and speaker—drew from their clairvoyant gifts to independently and jointly describe their views on the planes of reality, chakras, and more. Their peer Alice Bailey, who channeled otherworldly spirits, eventually founded her own arcane school after building on her background as a Theosophist. Leadbeater, Besant, and Bailey are often considered Neo-Theosophists because their views differ somewhat from the original founders.[23]

At times there was dissension within the ranks, with Blavatsky on one side and Leadbeater and Besant on the other. Over time the differences caused Leadbeater and Besant's ideas to be classified as Neo (or Pseudo) Theosophist rather than Theosophist. The teachings differed in terms of the understandings about God, Jesus, the identity of an individual, religious

ceremony, the nature of the seven planes, and more. The purpose of this section is mainly to feature Leadbeater's work and secondarily, Leadbeater's work with Besant. Unless otherwise noted, the following material is taken from Leadbeater's teachings.[24]

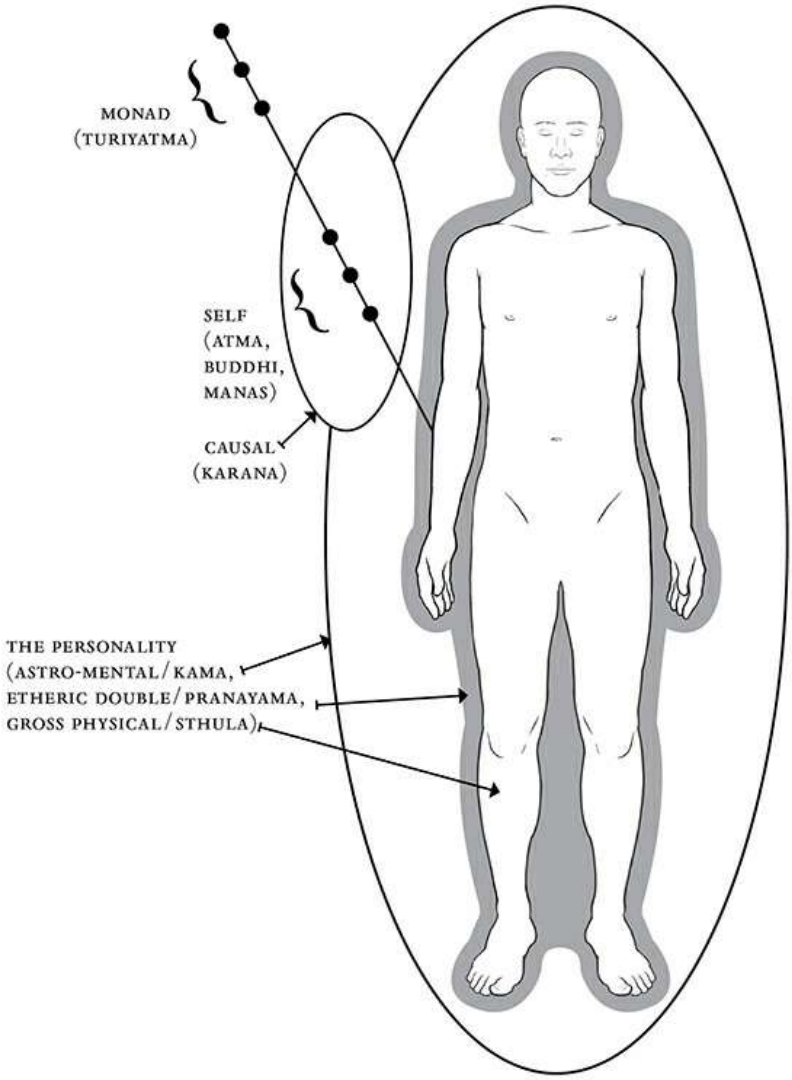

ILLUSTRATION 89—THE THEOSOPHICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE HUMAN BEING: Depicted is yet another image describing the configuration of a human being, according to Theosophists C. W. Leadbeater and C. Jinarajadasa. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Leadbeater's Cosmos

Leadbeater proposed that the universe is composed of three different forces —vitality, the primary force, and kundalini—although there are other forces, such as psychic and spiritual, which relate to humankind and the chakras.[25] All of these forces assist the development of the soul, which has several bodies and exists on many planes of reality. Leadbeater organized these as seven planes, each of which subdivides into seven additional planes. (These seven labels are chiefly Buddhist in origin. Other systems use Sanskrit and more Westernized terms.) Notice that they are numbered in descending order:

7. **Mahaparanirvanic:** The greatest plane of all.
6. **Paranirvanic:** Where we can possess an understanding of truth beyond anything that can be expressed.
5. **Nirvanic:** Plane of peace and transcendence, where we can achieve the level of being an adept.
4. **Buddhic:** Space of similarity to the Buddha.
3. **Mental:** Where we tap into the power of the mind. There are two parts: the rupa relates to form, and the arupa covers the formless.
2. **Astral:** Luminous body that is starry in nature and the location of passion and emotion.
1. **Physical:** The location of the dense body as well as the etheric body, or double. [26]

All the planes can also be organized into three categories: the personality, the self, and the monad. Illustration 89 depicts these three classifications; the system differs from the one just featured as it is a blend of Leadbeater's work with yet another teacher. According to Leadbeater, the universe was created by a supreme deity described as a three-in-one, or three aspects of the Logos, each of which is represented by a symbol. Each aspect of God entered reality through an outpouring of energy. In numerical sequence the aspects are the first aspect, the Father, represented by a dot that signifies the primary manifestation in our solar system and wields divine will; the second aspect, served by the Son (Christ), symbolized by a circle divided by its diameter,

representing the dual manifestation of reality that sends divine wisdom to humankind; and the third aspect, the Holy Spirit, epitomized by a circle within a Greek cross. This latter entity exercises divine authority and executes goodness.

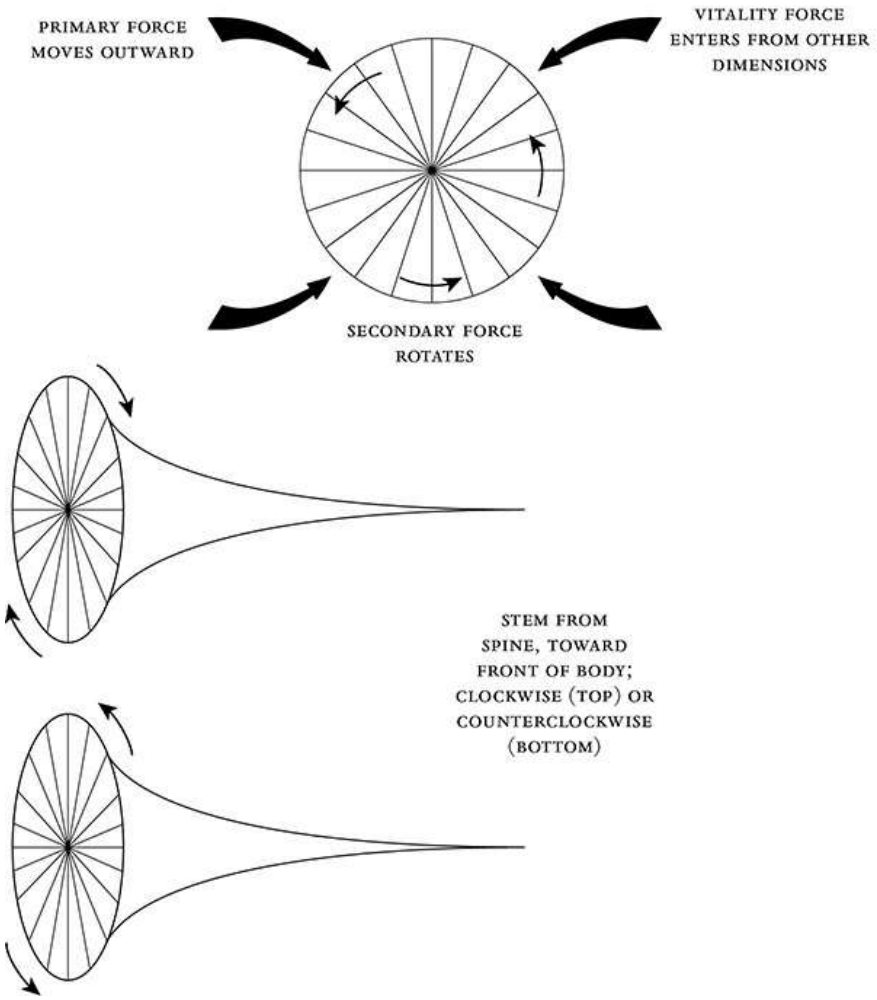

ILLUSTRATION 90—THE SHAPE AND STRUCTURE OF A CHAKRA: These images reflect the shape and structure of a chakra based on the esoteric works of the Theosophists. In most individuals I have found that a healthy chakra moves clockwise as measured looking from the body, but in others it moves counterclockwise most of the time.

ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

Technically, these three aspects of the Logos dwell in the top three planes and each has its own qualities and functions. These agents operate at a level

humans can understand.[27] The outpourings, which relate to the formation of the universe and provide us a return to the highest level, are organized in this way:

First Outpouring: Holy Spirit downward to the upper part of the fifth (nirvanic) plane. This outpouring formed the solar system.

Second Outpouring: The Son, which descends to the sixth plane and wears physical matter. This outpouring allowed the creation of matter and various planes and kingdoms. It is through this outpouring, which both descends and travels upward, that we can return to the higher planes.

Third Outpouring: The Father, which doesn't manifest beyond the highest planes and waits for us to rise to meet it.[28]

Leadbeater's Etheric Chakras

Leadbeater asserted that the chakras are vortexes located within the etheric body or double, which projects slightly beyond the physical body. Technically, the Theosophists did not support the existence of an etheric body, although Neotheosophists including Besant and Bailey and esoterics including Rudolf Steiner did. Leadbeater described this body as a mass of luminous violet-gray mist between the physical and astral bodies.[29] Appearing as saucerlike depressions in the surface of the etheric body, the chakras function like force centers that act as points of connection through which energy flows. When undeveloped they are about two inches in diameter and glow dully, but when awakened they are blazing whirlpools. See Illustration 90 for images of the chakras as related to these statements.

Perpetually rotating, the chakras operate like hubs for higher energies, succinctly organized as the primary force, kundalini, and vitality, each of which relates to an outpouring and a divine aspect. For one, the primary force enters through the center of each chakra. Distinct from the vitality force (also known as prana and often related to the second or spleen chakra) and from the serpent fire or kundalini force, the primary force is sevenfold in nature, and each aspect of it streams through a different chakra. The primary force is

an expression of the second outpouring and the second aspect of the Logos or the Christ and is sometimes called Fohat, as per Theosophist A. E. Powell, who has integrated the work of esoterics including Leadbeater and Besant.

This primary force can morph into many shapes, most commonly adopting the octahedron, made of four atoms in a square with a central atom vibrating up and down the middle of the quadrilateral and at right angles to it; it is also organized in a row of three atoms in a molecule.

This divine energy sets up right angles within the chakras, thus creating secondary forces that produce a current of electricity that flows at right angles to the axis of the circular chakra. The primary force continues to radiate like spokes emanating from a central hub. These spokes bind together the astral and etheric bodies and differ in number according to the chakras, which determines the number of petals that are seen.

Meanwhile, the secondary forces each have their own wavelength and weave under and over the currents related to the primary force, actually producing the flowerlike display the Hindus call lotuses.

In relation to the chakras, the kundalini is considered a separate force found on the outside veil of the etheric body. When activated, it enters through the astral body and moves into the flowerlike bells of the chakras, rising from the interior of the human body. Kundalini is part of the first outpouring, which originated from the third aspect, or the Holy Spirit. It is organized as a flat sphere of seven atoms and is not convertible into either the primary force or the force of vitality, which comes from the sun.

According to Leadbeater, the sun emanates several forms of etheric energy, including vitality. Vitality is closely related to the spleen chakra and is formed into a vitality globule, which consists of seven atoms that form a hexagon shape, with the central atom rapidly vibrating at right angles to the disc upon which the other atoms are arranged. Coming from the Father and therefore the third outpouring, it runs through each realm of existence and animates atoms from within. This vitality force enters some of the physical atoms and animates them, although it depends on light for power.

Simultaneously, the "will force" of the Logos enters as well. These two forces mix within the physical atom.

There are two kinds of etheric atoms: feminine/negative and masculine/positive. The positive atoms spin counterclockwise from the fourth dimension to the physical world and the negative atoms flow clockwise to shift from the physical world to the fourth dimension.[30] With the exception of the second chakra, Leadbeater's locations and depictions of the chakras are similar to the classical Hindu descriptions; see Illustration 91. His ideas about the chakras and their names, locations, spokes, colors, and meanings are as follows:

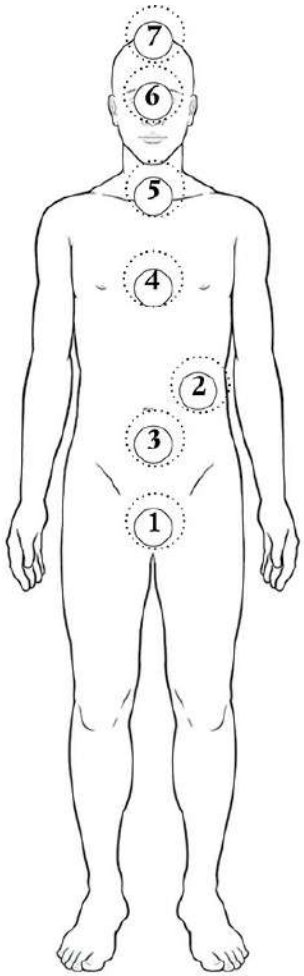

ILLUSTRATION 91—LEADBEATER'S CHAKRA SYSTEM: Leadbeater's chakra system replaces the second chakra in the classic Hindu chakra system with a spleen chakra.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

First Chakra: Muladhara (base) chakra located at the base of spine with four spokes radiating from the center dividing into red and orange quadrants. It is often symbolized by a flaming cross to acknowledge the kundalini lying within and corresponds closely to the vitality sent downward from the second (splenic) center.

Second Chakra: Spleen or splenic chakra found at the spleen with six horizontal streams devoted to the specialization of vitality coming from the sun. Every undulation or petal is a different color, usually red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet.

Third Chakra: Manipura, navel, or umbilical chakra that receives a primary force with ten radiations dividing into ten petals. Associated with emotions, the colors include several shades of red with green, often alternating.

Fourth Chakra: Anahata, heart, or cardiac chakra found at the heart with twelve spokes/petals that glow golden. It allows us to sympathize with other astral beings; in other words, through this center we project positive energy on others.

Fifth Chakra: Vishuddha, throat, or laryngeal chakra; this throat-based chakra has sixteen spokes that are mainly blue but also silvery and gleaming, sometimes featuring green.

Sixth Chakra: Ajña, brow, and front chakra located between the eyebrows and divided into halves. One is chiefly rose with some yellow and the other is purplish-blue. Although it is often said to have only two petals, each half is subdivided into forty-eight spokes, making ninety-six in all.

Seventh Chakra: Sahasrara, crown, or coronal chakra; this center contains prismatic hues of all colors but is mainly violet. There are twelve main spokes in this center with hundreds of other spokes emanating from these petals, bringing the total to 960 radiations or petals that, upon spiritual advancement, cover the top of the head. At

first it is seen as a depression in the etheric body, but as we progress it turns inside out and stops being a receiving center; instead, it radiates.[31]

Leadbeater further divides the chakras into three categories in relationship to their functions in this way:

Physiological: Chakras one and two, which are concerned with bringing in the serpent fire (kundalini) from the earth and the energy of the sun.

Personal: Chakras three through five, engaging the forces that support an individuated personality. These include the lower astral of the third chakra, the higher astral linked with the fourth chakra, and the lower mind in the fifth chakra.

Spiritual: Chakras six and seven, activating only when spiritual development has occurred.[32]

The Chakras and Prana: The Vitality Globule

The vitality globule, which emanates from the sun, is one manifestation of the second major force that affects the chakras (the primary being first and the kundalini the third). This vitality force, prana, enters an atom, where it is joined with the will of the Logos to shape the physical atom.

These globules, organized as hexagrams, could be described as bubbles that hold the physical realm together. While these globules aren't composed of light, they are dependent on light and are more animated in the presence of the sun.

Each globule is made of seven physical atoms charged with prana. Besides being operational inside of physical atoms, they are also drawn into the chakras at the spleen, where they are decomposed and broken into streams of different colors. Each of the six spokes of the splenic or second chakra seizes upon one of these color-coded vitality streams, and the seventh vitality stream disappears through the center of the chakra vortex. The vitality or pranic rays now go in different directions in the body.

The colors of these pranic streams aren't the same as those that appear in our rainbow-hued world. Rather, they are shades seen on the higher levels in

the causal, mental, and astral bodies. Ultimately, the six radiations are describable as violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and dark red, while the seventh is rose red. Although there are seven pranic streams, only five actually run through the body: the blue and violet rays form a single ray, as do the orange and dark red.

Each of these rays has a specific destination, is aligned with a specific chakra, and represents the principles of one of the layers of reality that are featured in Madame Blavatsky's work on Illustration 88, as well as one of the prana vayus mentioned in Hindu chakra systems. This information is as follows:

Violet-Blue Ray: Proceeds to the throat, where it divides. A light blue rivulet remains in the fifth chakra, and a dark blue and violet tributary travels upward before splitting again. The dark blue extends into the lower and central parts of the brain, in particular the sixth chakra, and the violet into the upper brain, diffusing into the 960 petals of the seventh chakra. This ray represents the atma principles and the udana vayu. (The violet color serves the etheric double.)

Yellow Ray: Travels to the heart before passing into and permeating the brain, where it nourishes twelve petals that lie within the seventh chakra. This ray serves the buddhic principle and the prana vayu.

Green Ray: Floods the abdomen and particularly the third chakra, enlivening the liver, kidneys, intestines, and digestive system. This ray underscores the *kama manas*, or lower mind, and the samana vayu.

Rose Ray: Runs throughout the body along the nerves and is related to the splenic (second) chakra. This ray supports the *kama rupa*, or formless mind, and the vyana vayu.

Orange-Red Ray: Flows to the base of the spine and the reproductive organs, and also includes a certain amount of dark purple color. If an initiate can rise above their lower nature, the ray also rises to the seventh chakra, where the orange ray increases intellectual powers, the

> dark red turns crimson and enhances unselfish affection, and the dark purple changes into pale violet and quickens the initiate's spiritual nature. After this triplicate shift, the orange-red ray passes straight into the spine from the base and travels through the hollow in the vertebral column. The violet part of this ray represents the principles of the etheric double and the apana vayu.[33]

Chakras and the Kundalini Force

Kundalini, the serpent fire, is the lowest embodiment of the three main forces that enter through the three outpourings. As such, while it is located in the first chakra, it is surrounded by a veil of etheric matter and found on the etheric part of the physical body. Its energy, however, emanates from the astral body to enter the chakras upon an arousal and then well up inside the body.

To Leadbeater, kundalini is more than a physical process. It is a manifestation of the first outpouring of divine energy and exists on all planes. It is also the expression of etheric matter, although this matter also originates deep in the earth, where the earthly elements are organized in a cyclic order that ascends from the center of the earth in a spiral. This "laboratory" of the Holy Ghost constitutes the cauldron that creates kundalini and sends it upward. As it rises, so can we, potentially evolving from the lower to higher realms. And, as Leadbeater says, we are children of the earth as well as the sun, and kundalini reflects this truth.

According to Leadbeater, the kundalini coils in the root chakra but is clothed in hollow concentric spheres of astral and etheric matter, one inside the other. There are seven such spheres in the root chakra near the coccyx. The kundalini only rouses once the energy latent in the inner layers starts to heat up.

What happens next is understood with a better picture of chakric structure. From a structural point of view, the mouth of the flowerlike bell of the chakra is on the surface of the etheric body, but the stem of the blossom springs from the center of the spinal cord. An etheric stem curves down from the etheric

body to link this root with the external chakra. The force from the spine is naturally sucked through the stem and into the chakras, and here it meets the flow of divine energy. Remember that the chakras are receiving streams of primary force. During a kundalini rising, the kundalini meets the surface stream of primary force, causing the spokes to revolve in opposite directions and create a considerable amount of pressure. This is the "marriage" of divine energy, considered male, with kundalini, which is feminine. The plexuses are now stimulated and the bodily nerves awakened; changes occur at every level, even atomically. The ideal manifestation of the physical atom now appears. Previously (and simplistically), atoms are affected by polarities; they can be negatively or positively mined for energy. The effect of a kundalini marriage of matter and divinity transforms the atom into a thing of great beauty and goodness.

after the awakening: the astral centers open

After the awakening, major changes take place in the etheric and astral bodies, as well as in the chakras related to each—yes, there are chakras in the astral vehicle, not only the etheric. According to Leadbeater, each of the etheric chakras that we've been exploring also relates to an astral center, although the astral kin are fourth-dimensional vortexes, not third-dimensional. They also extend in directions quite different from the etheric centers and can be found in the inside of the astral vehicle.

One of the tasks of the etheric centers, when awakened, is to bring into the physical body the qualities inherent in the astral centers. These astral centers can now work in the following ways:

First Astral Center: Force activates serpent fire in this astral center so it can move to the next center.

Second Astral Center: Entire astral vehicle is vitalized, and the initiate can now perform astral travel in a conscious manner.

Third Astral Center: Awakens sensitivity to feeling and external influences.

Fourth Astral Center: Endows the initiate with the power to comprehend and sympathize with the vibrations of other astral beings.

Fifth Astral Center: The initiate gains the power of hearing on the astral plane.

Sixth Astral Center: This center opens the ability to perceive the shape and nature of astral objects.

Seventh Astral Center: This center endows the initiate with all astral faculties.[34]

Thus is kundalini considered more than a serpent; it is a force that awakens more than we might ever imagine.

Thoughts and Emotions: Forces in the Chakras and Mental and Astral Planes

Besides the three main forces—primary, vitality, and kundalini—there are psychic and spiritual forces that enter through the chakras and affect a person's mental and emotional life (while the other three forces are mainly directed at bodily well-being). These spiritual energies don't affect the lower two chakras but do impact the higher chakras, especially in terms of our ability to pick up thoughts and feelings from others.

Leadbeater explained that thoughts are energetic masses that occupy space. Thoughts about the same subjects will congregate, creating a sort of thought center in the atmosphere. An individual can be influenced by this thought center and also add to it. This scenario is especially true on the mental plane, and a similar situation occurs on the astral plane in relation to feelings. One of the main differences between how thoughtforms and emotional congestion work is that several thoughts can gather in a single place on the mental plane and be potentially accessible to anyone through one "world center," which gathers the thoughts together. Emotional forms from the astral plane don't incorporate in a single space but rather float around in their local neighborhood.

When thoughts or emotions affect someone, they do so through the chakras. For example, imagine that someone is scared. As a result, fear will radiate from their astral body and, in turn, attract any "fear clouds" that are in the vicinity. If they can master their fear, the energy will discharge through the navel chakra, which regulates strong and negative emotions. Higher emotions, however, can play out through the heart. This was a determination made by Annie Besant, who divided emotions into two types: hate and love. Hate-based emotions operate through the navel chakra; love-based, through the heart. In addition, these two emotions subdivide into three parts. Love carries the energies of benevolence, the desire for mutual assistance, and reverence. Hate is made of scorn, desire for mutual injury, and fear.[35]

In regard to thoughts, the character of a thought, according to Leadbeater and Besant, determines its appearance as a color and form. Thoughts both radiate vibrationally and can float in form, as perceivable in the mental body. Thoughts can create a form because every impulse from the mental or astral body is immediately clothed in the vehicle of vitalized matter, the essence that composes the etheric realities. In this way a thought becomes similar to a living creature; hence, it is sometimes actually called an elemental. Simple thoughts produce a single vibration, and complex thoughts formulate several vibrations that ripple throughout the different mental subplanes.

As has been inferred, we are affected by other's thoughts, not only our own. The waves emanating from another person will produce the same thoughts in someone nearby. The ability of someone to affect another is dependent on the clarity of their thoughtforms as well as the susceptibility of the recipient.

Especially in the astral plane, thoughts and emotions are easily perceived as shapes and colors. When an emotion comes up suddenly, the original colors of the astral plane will suddenly shift, obscured with the color related to the emotion. Most often, however, we experience complex thoughts and correlated emotions, which means that the radiating vibration will appear as several colors instead of one.[36]

From the point of view of the forms, there are three classes of thoughts: there are thoughts that actually take the shape of the thinker and can appear as

an apparition of that person; there are thoughts that appear in the image of a material object; and then there are thoughts that take on their own appearance and express the qualities of the matter they draw around them. Certain thoughts—especially those desirous of wishing good and evil—when projected at another individual will seek out that person. If the thoughtforms can't find or penetrate that person, the thought might enter material sympathetic to their vibrations.[37]

EXERCISE: **Perceiving the Colors in the Astral Body**

Want to try perceiving some of the colors in your own or another's astral body? Each color can indicate a personality trait or a specific issue related to errant thoughtforms, and is easiest to perceive in the astral plane. As you read through the following colors, pay attention to the sense of your own astral body, which can be intuitively seen and even sensed through your inner knowing.

Black: Presence of hatred and malice. Hate thoughtforms look like coils of poisonous smoke.

Red: Flashes of red with brown on a black background indicate selfish anger. Noble indignation supporting the oppressed is brilliant scarlet on a normal auric background. Lurid red is sensuality. Crimson represents love.

Brown: Dull brown red is avarice; brown-grey is selfishness; green-brown with scarlet flashes is jealousy.

Gray: Heavy gray is depression. When arranged in parallel lines, the victim is imprisoned in a depressive astral cave. Livid gray indicates fear.

Orange: Pride or ambition.

Yellow: Good color indicating intellectuality.

Green: Is a range from evil and deceitful, such as if hued gray, to kind and sympathetic in lighter tones. Apple green is vitality.

Blue: When clear and dark, blue speaks of religious feelings. Light blue indicates a noble spiritual idealism, and luminous lilac-blue typifies higher spirituality.[38]

Two Krishnamurtis Awaken

What might be the effects of enlightenment achieved through awakening the chakras? The stories of two different men—both named Krishnamurti—provide us with insights.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, who was born in 1895 in India and died in 1986, gives us one snapshot. Krishnamurti's father moved the family to the Theosophical Society in India to take a job in 1909. There Krishnamurti met Charles Leadbeater, who immediately perceived that he had a particularly brilliant aura. The Theosophical Society adopted the child. In 1911 Annie Besant took him and his brother to England with her; after another visit to India, Krishnamurti and his brother did not see India again until 1921. In England Krishnamurti was educated as "the new Christ."

In 1922 Krishnamurti, after traveling to Australia, voyaged to Ojai, California. There he entered a state of delirium, accompanied by pain—and spiritual awareness. He emerged from this experience with a sense of being one with everything. He could look at a man mending a road and know himself as that man—as well as the pickaxe the man held and the very stone the man was breaking up. Later, in 1929, though he had for years been a spokesman for the Theosophists, he tired of being the divine child of Theosophy and become instead an independent speaker and teacher.

Based on his descriptions of it, Jiddu Krishnamurti's enlightenment experience has been labeled a traditional form of Hindu awakening, including the arousal of the kundalini and its

climb through the chakras—and the associated pain. His core teaching is beautiful, speaking to the higher consciousness he attained. As he wrote the year he declared his independence from Theosophy, "Truth is a pathless land."[39]

A different enlightenment experience blessed Uppaluri Gopala (U. G.) Krishnamurti, who lived between 1918 and 2007. U. G. Krishnamurti was an Indian thinker who questioned enlightenment, insisting that there is nothing to understand, as enlightenment is really a natural state. Though he had actively sought enlightenment as a young man, he came to realize that it is not something that can be bestowed by another person. At the age of forty-nine he began to experience a mystical transformation, involving everything from bodily changes to bewildering states of consciousness. When his transformation was complete, he insisted that he had no message for humankind, yet responded to seekers' questions on an individual basis.

U. G. Krishnamurti's transformation began as he sat beneath a tree. While pondering deep matters, he felt a sudden internal explosion, as if every part of him labeled with an "I" had disintegrated. He believed that he had always been tight and too divided on every level, and felt intensely tortured with pain. Over the next weeks he continued to change.

For five days in a row U. G. Krishnamurti experienced each of the following alterations, many of them physical:

- Soft and golden skin
- Decluttered mind
- Ability to taste only the predominant spice in a dish
- A "vistavision," in which he could see everything with total attention; his eyes also stopped blinking instinctively
- All sounds, even those external to him, seeming to emerge from within

U. G. Krishnamurti next underwent a process of dying, yet right before his body shut down he felt an outburst of tremendous energy, as if his body and the entire universe were vibrating. He also felt incredible pain resulting from this, which continued for months.

U. G. Krishnamurti's friends then observed swellings on his body, in various shapes and colors, at the chakra sites. Once they formed images of Hindu gods; at other times they presented in the form of a cobra. U. G. Krishnamurti himself noticed that eventually the ajña chakra took charge of his body.

After he physically recovered while remaining spiritually transformed, U. G. Krishnamurti came to believe that he had undergone a purification of his consciousness. He saw everything we hold sacred and holy as contamination. When we truly transform, he had discovered, there are no divisions, only a return to a primordial state of being.[40]

As you have seen, though they shared a love of investigating the mysteries, the Theosophists were, above all, individuals—glowing stars with distinct beliefs and systems of their own. It is not hard to imagine Madame Blavatsky, Charles Leadbeater, Alice Bailey, and others having heated discussions, each advocating for their own model of the workings of the macrocosmic universe and the microcosmic human, including the appearance and functioning of the chakras. The sum total of their exhaustive writings showed the world how complex chakra medicine could truly be—and how Western it could become.

Largely because of Arthur Avalon and the Theosophists, chakras entered the professional arenas of psychology, education, and more. In the next chapter we'll look at ideas about chakras from such brilliant thinkers as Rudolf Steiner and Carl Jung and mystics such as Edgar Cayce, and we'll keep moving right into today's world.

[contents]

Chakras Come of Age in the West

Deep in their roots,
all flowers keep the light.

Theodore Roethke

The Theosophists gathered chakra stars from around the world and tied them into a bouquet that made sense to Western seekers. Westerners could hold the resulting bundle and understand and relate to it. There wasn't only one type of star in the collective wisdom. There were white dwarfs and red giants, neutrons and the all-consuming black holes. Every type of star was included, differences grafted into a single stem called Theosophy.

Thanks to the pioneers of Theosophy, it became okay to entertain new thoughts and add additional colors and flavors—perspectives—to the mix. Chakraology grew up, as does the maturing person who figures out that a single thought, however beautiful and complex it might be, is not a complete philosophy. Chakra medicine became a spirituality and a science, a path toward health as well as spiritual transformation. The light of each vital chakra-related idea and approach shone forth to be considered and expanded upon by others.

In this chapter I'll showcase the individuals and movements that helped bring chakra medicine of age in which individuals are presented choices to meet their particular needs. By the early 1900s we had been exposed to and could believe a number of different ideas about the world, and therefore ourselves and the chakras. Great minds grasped truths of the past and mixed them inventively with the new, including Sir Arthur Avalon, Rudolf Steiner, Edgar Cayce, Carl Jung, and others. In this chapter we'll look at their unique contributions to chakra knowledge, chakras placed like flowers within great philosophical beds.

Then we move forward into the later twentieth century and into yet another movement: the New Age, itself a collection of other movements such as New Thought. Now our starry field of chakra medicine takes the form of endless comets streaming across the sky—various systems, ideas, and approaches that have initiated chakras into almost every crack of the Western world, from yoga classes to the boardroom. By reading through the more recent contributions, you'll come to find that if anything characterizes the modern chakra medicine community, it is a sense of inclusiveness. Now the light shines nearly everywhere.

Let's begin the last leg of our exploration of modern Western thought with Sir Arthur Avalon, who, you may recall, you have met before.

The Later "Easterner": Sir Arthur Avalon

Arthur Avalon is the pen name for Sir John George Woodroffe, whose book *The Serpent Power*, published in 1919 in the West, shared the explosive secrets of tantric and shakti yoga from the East. Avalon's knowledge is a powerful base for the chakra explorations featured in part 2. In this section I want to highlight only his most important chakra theories.

To Avalon, the chakras are points of consciousness, doorways that enable us to link to Spirit. Ancient tantric texts establish that the sun, often along with other celestial objects, receives prana for the solar system directly from the Absolute. This is called tattvic matter. There are five distinct vibrations of tattvic matter, with ancient tantric texts suggesting that the sun emanates 360 tattvic rays that interact with the rest of the celestial objects. (The quantum physicist might call this solar energy "quantum matter.")

Avalon described these 360 tattvic rays as strings linking to the etheric body of humans through the chakra system. These strings are categorized into three groups. That emanating from the earth or fire is embedded in the first and second chakras, the sun's tattvic rays are found in the third and fourth chakras, and the moon's rays are found in the fifth and sixth chakras. These rays help the chakras slow down the prana, or cosmic energy, in the chakras to allow karma, manifested energy patterns, to formulate. The karma, a form

of density, outlines the lessons that the soul needs to self-express. These tattvic rays are also linked to different devas, a race of beings that work within the laws of karma to enable correct living.[1]

Woodroffe explaines that the universe is nothing more than an active Kundalini Shakti rising through the nadis, activating the chakras to meet her mate, Shiva, in the crown chakra. The initiate's activities or practices are called sadhana, which eventually produces the siddhi (spiritual gifts) found inside the chakras.[2] The chakras are six in number, according to Woodroffe, as the crown is not technically considered a chakra but rather a summation of the energetic system.

Woodroffe's system, which relates the fourth Hindu chakra to two Western chakras, is as follows:

Chakra Name	Western Chakra	Location
Muladhara	Coccygeal/Root	Coccyx
Svadhisthana	Sacral	Genitals
Manipura	Navel	Beneath Navel
Anahata	Solar Plexus/Heart	Center of Chest
Vishuddha	Throat	Neck
Ajña	Third Eye	Brow
Sahasrara	Crown	Crown [3]

Education and Beyond: Rudolf Steiner

Rudolf Joseph Lorenz Steiner, an Austrian philosopher and esotericist who lived from 1861 to 1925, developed a complex cosmological system that incorporates chakras. Living according to his own maxim—that there are no limits to human knowledge—Steiner was a social reformer and an architect who was involved in other areas as various as biodynamic agriculture, drama, and movement arts. Steiner is perhaps best known as the originator of anthroposophy, a humanistic spiritual philosophy that branched into education and medicine and lives on today in the form of the Waldorf

School.[4] Understanding Steiner's views on chakras, which align with the seven-chakra Hindu system, involves comprehending his broader beliefs, including those he held about the existence of evil, the evolution of this planet, and the presence of dark forces, as well as his interpretation of layers of reality such as the etheric and astral bodies. But in a nutshell, Steiner believed that our chakras are an expression of a higher truth. As he wrote, "Manifestations of life are always sevenfold."[5]

Fundamental to Steiner's chakra philosophy is that evil fulfills a specific task: to promote the ascent of humankind. The existence of evil invites a thorough examination of important issues and compels us to turn away from the world of matter and focus on the world of spirit. Put another way, evil exists to educate us about freedom from material realms.[6] In this we find echoes of many Hindu traditions, which testify that we climb the chakra ladder to attain the reward of *moksha,* or liberation.

Steiner also proposed a complex evolution of beings and souls, differentiating four developmental eras over which human forms and qualities were created. (He also proposed three future eras, which we've yet to get to. During the final era we will reverse the previous stages.) Within each era before our current one were beings that were charged with assisting us in our development. Each era, which Steiner labeled with the term "old," was also managed by an energy body, and since we are concerned with energetic systems as well as chakras, I include some of these in our discussions of Steiner's theories. Here is the resulting breakdown of the four eras we have experienced so far:

Era	Type of Body	Vital Life Form	Active Hierarchy
Old Saturn	Physical	Mineral	Archai
Old Sun	Etheric	Plant	Archangels
Old Moon	Astral	Animal	Angels
Earth	Ego	Spirit	Humankind

Many of the beings in the active hierarchies of the first three eras actually became humanlike during their reign. For instance, during the Old Saturn period, the archai, a group of beings that govern epochs, projected their spirits into human form, although they remained in the spiritual realms while doing so. The beings assisting us during the Old Sun era were the archangels, who guide races or various ethnic groups, and those present during the Old Moon were angels, who guide individuals. While these beings were more present during their respective eras, some continue to assist the human race as it attempts to develop itself spiritually today. During these eras, the subtle bodies continued to evolve. Basically, new subtle systems were added to the fundamental human form. During the Old Saturn era, humans were mainly physical. The Old Sun age saw the addition of etheric bodies, and Old Moon, the astral bodies. It is said that more recently, we've donned the body of ego.

According to Steiner, these subtle bodies appeared different from what we might imagine. For instance, during Old Saturn, matter was gaseous. During Old Moon, it was fluid, like liquid. We've slowly become more solid over time.

As humans developed, a similar evolution occurred with other life forms. During Old Saturn, minerals had a physical body. The minerals that exist today could therefore tell us about Old Saturn. During the next era, plants, which host both a physical and etheric body, were predominant, and so on. Humans are considered to be below the archai and angelic hierarchies and above the three natural kingdoms in terms of development.

Not content with tracing the roots of earthly evolution, Steiner also described the evolutionary stages of the entire physical universe, which are different from the eras I just described. During the Polarian stage, the cosmos was made of "differentiated heat," which included the planets, moon, and sun, all interconnected in one body. During the Hyperborean stage, matter condensed and gave rise to air. Some of the planetary bodies, including Earth, differentiated during this time. During the Lemurian age, the land and seas became more distinct, although matter was still flexible—think toffee. The

Atlantean age was distinguished by solid form, and the post-Atlantean is our current age.

Beings who "fall behind" or choose evil during their stage become fallen beings, standing in opposition to the development of their own kind and other beings. Each fallen being attempts to interfere through a different energetic body. For instance, the fallen beings from Saturn are called the Asuric; they attempt to injure humankind's physical bodies. The Athrimanic fell during the Sun era and disable through the etheric bodies, while the Luciferic, the fallen ones from the Moon period, tempt our astral bodies.[7]

Steiner's Theory of Our Threefold Nature

To understand the human essence from Steiner's point of view, we must start with the simple division of the human as having a body, soul, and spirit. Through the body we experience the external world; through the soul—which has many subdivisions that I will describe further—we learn about our personalities; and through our spirit we invite the world to reveal its secrets.

According to Steiner, the soul is quite complicated. We have a soul body, which serves as the boundary for the soul just as the skin contains our body. Then there is the sentient soul, which processes perceptions from the physical world, and the intellectual or mind soul, which processes ideas and thoughts received from the spiritual realm, as well as perceptions arising from the physical organs. The consciousness soul links with the Divine. The spirit self is the part of us that exists in the spirit realm, and the life spirit is the vehicle for the divine forces that fuel us. Finally, the spirit body is our container in the spiritual world. To simplify—or further complicate—matters, our astral body is basically a combination of the soul body and the sentient soul.

A succinct categorization of the various aspects of a human being, from base to spiritual, includes the following:

1. Physical body—material structure
2. Etheric body—life processes
3. Astral body—bears consciousness
4. Ego—self-awareness

5. Spirit self—intuition and self
6. Life spirit—enduring spirit-soul content
7. Spirit body—fully individuated spirit

The body relates to 1 through 3; the soul operates in 3 and 4; and the spirit is expressed in 5 through 7.

To further explain these states, we live and function within the ego, which, interestingly, was implanted in us by the spirits that direct our development, and which connects us to the immediate environment. The ego represents the faculty of self-awareness that is available to humanity and is experienced through three unconscious elements: consciousness, life, and physicality. We have little awareness of the greater world until the ego unfolds within us and through the other basic bodies, which are legacies of an earlier evolution.[8]

The physical body, which we share in common with minerals, is subject to natural laws and is biochemical in nature. There are three functional areas in the physical body, each of which supports a psychological activity, therefore inviting us to experience our consciousness (soul). The nerves relate to thinking and perception; the rhythmic system, including breathing and circulation, supports feeling; and the metabolic system, including the diaphragms and limbs, relates to will.

Our etheric body, held in common with the plant world, is united with the physical body but separates at death. It is also called the life body or glandular body and helps us experience our intellectual soul. This body can only be seen through the "eyes of the spirit," or the part of us that can see as might God or the Spirit. The etheric body is a vital aspect of our human existence, for it molds the physical body. During life it continually combats illnesses and other destructive forces, and it also links us with "likekind," our community of fellow humans.

If you want to develop individually, you must cultivate the astral body, which you hold in common with the animal kingdom and which determines individuality. It is also called the feeling or nerve body. It carries our joys, pain, instincts, impulses, passions, ideas, and desires; causes the same in the

physical body; and is technically considered a combination of our soul body and our sentient soul.[9]

Steiner and the Chakras

Now that you have had a quick orientation to Steiner's highly intricate views of human evolution and the complex interplay of cosmic forces and states of being that underlie it, it becomes possible to explore his thoughts about chakras. To Steiner, the chakras are the sense organs of the soul: vehicles for unlocking deeper truths. They therefore play a critical role in the choice between good and evil, and ultimately, they are key vehicles for raising our consciousness and escaping the clutches of the Kali Yuga, the age of humankind we now occupy.[10] It is generally agreed that this Yuga ends in 2025.

Steiner based his chakra knowledge on an unusual form of yoga called Gayatri-Sadhana, the goal of which is to receive an organism of the soul that looks like a luminous cloud discernable in the midst of the physical body. A clairvoyant can observe within this astral body our impulses, desires, passions, and ideas, each appearing as a different color or shape. For instance, the thoughts of individuals with one-sided views present as sharp-edged shapes, while the thoughts of less rigid people would appear fluid.

In an undeveloped person, the chakras would be dark in color and inert. The more developed a person becomes, the brighter and more luminous the chakras' colors are and the more movement occurs in them.

Unlike professionals on the yoga path, Steiner described the chakras from the top to the bottom of the body because he believed this was the path we need to follow today. We can no longer be dependent on our sense perceptions. Rather, our starting point should be in the top of the head. He believed that the crown chakra, which will be described further in this section as per Steiner's beliefs, linked with a sort of supersensible or clairvoyant sphere, one that adds logic and practicality to our approach to life. By desending into the lower chakras, we become more intelligent about the senses represented in the lower body and can actually awaken new chakras.[11]

Like other chakra experts, Steiner affiliated the chakras with lotuses, although he also suggested that only half the petals of a lotus were actually open. While they had been open during previous stages of evolution, they have closed because of our "de-evolution." When we work on the issues related to the accessible half of the petals, the remaining petals will open.

Steiner also differs from other metaphysicians in describing an eight-petalled lotus in the heart area in addition to most of the other typically placed chakras—a newly emerging central etheric organ. This energy body will help us overcome our dependence on thinking and the brain and open up our paranormal senses. You will notice that the actual heart chakra is still described with twelve petals. Eventually, however, the eight-petalled etheric chakra will take over the functioning of the traditional heart chakra. I find it interesting that his eight-petalled chakra is quite similar to the hrit chakra described in Part 3, chapter 7. Also called the celestial wishing tree, this chakra enables Spirit to grant wishes to those who deeply desire goodness.

In Steiner's best-known descriptions of the chakras, there are only six in addition to the eight-petalled chakra. In certain works, Steiner says that the etheric heart chakra first develops over our head and is then enclosed within the crown chakra, which is itself first situated in the forehead chakra. At some point, this etheric heart chakra becomes a sort of inverted crown chakra.[12] Following is the most bare-bones description of Steiner's system, in which the chakras are described in relationship to where they are located and the number of petals they contain.

- Between the eyes, two petals. This third eye chakra helps us bring forth pure, conscious thinking. It enables logic and the ability to perceive abstract thoughts. Developing this chakra involves focusing on higher and more logical as well as spiritually accurate thoughts.
- Larynx, sixteen petals. The throat chakra invites clairvoyant perceptions and observations of the true laws of natural phenomena, as well as the mentality and character of other souls.

- Heart, twelve petals. The heart chakra awakens us to the esoteric path of schooling. It permits clairvoyant knowledge about the sentiments of others and observations of the deeper powers in animals and plants. As well, this chakra encourages us to go beyond logic and learn how to think with the heart.
- Navel (pit of stomach), ten petals. The navel chakra enables insight into the abilities and talents of other souls. It also allows us to perceive the true roles of animals, plants, stones, metals, and more, and it endows us with the ability to comprehend and sympathize with other astral entities.
- Abdomen, six petals. Also called the sex chakra, this chakra enables mastery of the entire personality and unification between the bodily functions and passions of the soul. When it is evolved, the six-petalled lotus invites communication with beings native to higher worlds, if they are manifested in the astral or soul world.
- Sexual or perineum region, four petals. This root chakra contains the powers of the moon and can be depicted by the sign of the cross or swastika. It enables the use of moon forces to direct the activity of elemental beings in nature.[13]

EXERCISE: **Steiner's Advice for the Fifth Chakra**

Rudolf Steiner developed exercises for many of the chakras. These were designed to empower us to access the attributes that will complete a chakra expansion. By focusing on the opened petals, which make up half of the petals in a chakra, we could encourage the others to blossom.

To offer an example, according to Steiner, unlocking the sixteen petals of the larynx chakra can be accomplished through eight steps. To put them into play, breathe into your fifth chakra and visualize sixteen lotus petals. Think of two petals while focusing on a question. Wait until you get an intuitive sense of guidance or advice, then decide if you can follow it. Focus on two more petals, ask a question, pause, and

wait for insight. Continue this process eight times, or until you are through the petals. You can continually ask these questions of yourself —and your fifth chakra—to open to higher wisdom, even after you finish this exercise.

- Focus on how you receive ideas. Perceive each idea as having significance.
- Control your resolutions. Select nothing that is meaningless.
- Speak only what is sensible and purposeful.
- Select your actions with care.
- Live a harmonious daily life.
- Fulfill obligations, conducting yourself with self-knowledge.
- Learn as much from life as possible.
- Self-reflect.[14]

The Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) and the Sleeping Prophet

The Association for Research and Enlightment was founded in 1931 to explore spirituality, holistic health, and mysticism. It was based on the work of Edgar Cayce (1877–1945), the most famous psychic known today.

For forty-three years this devoted Sunday school teacher, father, and "normal man" channeled information uncovering everything from the grand —the secrets of the universe—to the humble: ways to heal warts. His works are vast, totalling more than three hundred titles, and include topics such as meditation, auras, soul mates, and chakras. Cayce is known as "the sleeping prophet" because he entered a trance state akin to sleep to bring through information from his source.[15]

Cayce believed that the seven chakras are the spirits of God sent to earth. They operate as antennas of a sort, receiving waves of harmonics that our senses pick up. In spirit form, however, they are vehicles for the will of the greater spirit.[16] One of Cayce's contributions to the chakra field was his interpretation of chakras as related to the churches described in Revelation, a

concept I mentioned in the section about Swedenborgianism. Cayce linked the churches to the Lord's Prayer, even though they are not mentioned in it. For Cayce, each of these churches serves as a sort of waystation in the prayer, a clue to help us align our lives with the principles in the prayer. He also linked each chakra to a phrase from the Lord's Prayer.

Essentially, Cayce drew on the Bible to explain the seven Hindu chakras through Western eyes. Because of this, he also associated the chakras with the classical components, from color to sound and even planets, which he believed were energetically related to specific chakras and could also serve as homes in between lifetimes. He also thought that our bodies were arranged in the same fashion as the universe; thus, what is in the heavens mirrors what is found on the earth.[17]

I am most fascinated by his depiction of the chakras as related to his interpretation of the book of Revelation, a topic covered in numerous sources including John Van Auken's book based on Cayce's teachings, *Edgar Cayce on the Revelation*.[18] Cayce believed that this Western work taught concepts present in Eastern traditions, specifically those concerning spirituality and the chakras. He believed that we develop chakra by chakra, with the Holy Spirit rising through each one.

Cayce taught orally, and his thoughts were recorded as people wrote them down, so there are some inconsistencies. In summarizing the following characteristics of the chakras, I have created the most complete rendering of his work that I can.

Chakra: First

Location: Root, base of spine

Endocrine Gland: Ovaries and testes; pelvic plexus (L4)

Descriptors

Color: Red

Element: Earth

Note: Do

Lord's Prayer Phrase: "Give us this day our daily bread"
Planet: Saturn, which spiritualizes our physical self
Church: Church of Ephesus, which means "daily bread"

Purpose: Survival. This material chakra holds a promise: by owning our essential identity and wholeness, we can eat again of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden.

Chakra: Second

Location: Navel, hypogastric or pelvic plexus (L4)

Endocrine Gland: Leydig cells; these are interstitial cells near the testes in men. While women don't have them, the pituitary gland of both genders secretes a luteinizing hormone that creates male hormones, including testosterone.

Descriptors

Color: Orange
Element: Water
Note: Re
Lord's Prayer Phrase: "Lead us not into temptation"
Planet: Neptune, accentuating the mystical forces in our lives
Church: Church of Smyrna, which means "not into temptation"

Purpose: Male/female balance. Along with the sixth chakra, the second chakra serves as a seat of the soul and relates to the subconscious mind. The goal in regard to this chakra is to release fear.

Chakra: Third

Location: Solar plexus, epigastric plexus (T9)

Endocrine Gland: Adrenal glands

Descriptors

Color: Yellow
Element: Fire
Note: Mi

Lord's Prayer Phrase: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"

Planet: Mars, accentuating anger and madness, calling for subduing the passions

Church: Church of Pergamos, which means "our debts"

Purpose: Self-preservation. Through this center we desire personal and physical gratification but must learn instead to focus on the wisdom of God. If we can subdue our base urges and anger, we can open to grace and goodness and the use of constructive rather than destructive power.

Chakra: Fourth

Location: Heart, cardiac plexus (T4)

Endocrine Gland: Thymus

Descriptors

Color: Green

Element: Air

Note: Fa

Lord's Prayer Phrase: "In earth as it is in heaven" ("earth" refers to the lower four chakras, "heaven" to the upper three chakras)

Planet: Venus, which bestows love and beauty

Church: Church of Thyratira, which means "from evil"

Purpose: Self-gratification. This center enables us to operate with love in every way—the ideal love that leads to soul growth.

Chakra: Fifth

Location: Throat

Endocrine Gland: Thyroid, pharyngeal or cervical plexus (C3)

Descriptors

Color: Gray or blue

Element: Ether

Note: So

Lord's Prayer Phrase: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"

Planet: Uranus, which accentuates extremes (such as zeal), likes and dislikes, and interest in the occult

Church: Church of Sardis, which means "will"

Purpose: Divine will over self will. The channel of speech that should be expressed in concert with God's will, reflecting that we can choose to use our words to help or harm.

Chakra: Sixth

Location: Pineal

Endocrine Gland: Pineal, brain region

Descriptors:

Color: Indigo or purple

Element: Cloud, a vibration of water

Note: La

Lord's Prayer Phrase: "Hallowed be thy name"

Planet: Mercury, activating logic, not sentimentality

Church: Church of Philadelphia, which means "name"

Purpose: Spiritual perfection. This chakra reflects all that is holy and true, and enables us to fully experience the Holy Spirit.

Chakra: Seventh

Location: Forehead

Endocrine Gland: Pituitary, brain region

Descriptors

Color: Violet

Element: None

Note: Ti

Lord's Prayer Phrases: "Our Father which art in heaven" and "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (along with fifth and sixth chakras)

Planet: Jupiter, which provides strength

Church: Church of Laodicea, which means "heaven"

Purpose: Oneness. The third eye (according to Cayce), this chakra upholds our spiritual self, which can illuminate the body and mind.

After we have awakened all seven centers, the body rises to a new level of vibration. Twenty-four cranial nerves activate in the brain, enabling our higher self to tame our "beastly" urges and open seals on the body's chakras, leading to additional cleansing. My views on chakra seals are partially based on Cayce's work and are covered in chapter 34.[19]

EXERCISE: **Meditating the Cayce Way**

Edgar Cayce used a three-stage meditation technique for its calming effect when doing readings and taught others to do the same. I have simplified his process and encourage you to use it when you focus on your own chakra work.

Start by sitting or lying down and access your imaginative forces—your abilities to sense, see, feel, and know intuitively. To "sense" is to trust your body's sensations, measured as touch, taste, smell, or other awarenesses. To "see" involves psychically perceiving visions. To "feel" is to trust your emotions. To "know" is to engage your spirit or invisible spirits and believe in the inspirational. Use these communications in each of following stages, taking as much time as you need to be fully invested in each step.

Stage One: Remove your earthly or egotistic personality from your character. Set these aspects of yourself in front of you. You can pick them up later.

Stage Two: Allow your subconscious mind and soul to start running your physical body. You aren't moving or using your five senses; you are simply allowing your soul to arise. You might feel expansive or more buoyant during this stage.

Stage Three: Sense the presence of Spirit and connect with it. You will now experience a higher state of consciousness and awareness of the infinite.

Now ask Spirit to help clear any chakras or illuminate answers to any questions you have.

Reverse these stages when you feel complete, returning your personality to yourself as a last step, and continue with your day.

The "Fourth Way": The Subtle Anatomy Opens a New Path

George Gurdjieff (c. 1872–1949) was an Armenian mystic who blended several aspects of mysticism, from Theosophy to Rosicrucianism to Hermeticism, parting from tradition to create what he called the Fourth Way. His method, sometimes termed the Work, is based on the belief that history has presented us with three ways to attain higher consciousness: body, mind, and emotions. The Work, however, is not a fixed or permanent path. It has no form and is controlled by its own laws. Until we access this path—mainly through addressing our place in the universe, focusing on inner development and transcending the body to a higher order—we live as if in a waking dream.[20]

Gurdjieff was an adherent of the subtle anatomy, slightly altering Hindu, Buddhist, and tantric lore to create his own take on four energy bodies: the physical, natural, spiritual, and divine. He also reduced the five koshas to three additional subtle bodies: the physical, psychic, and causal. He didn't perceive these higher bodies in average human beings; they had to be cultivated. Neither did he believe that the soul was always immortal.[21]

Psychology Opens Its Doors: Carl Jung

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) was a Swiss psychotherapist and psychiatrist who founded analytical psychology. His astonishing contributions include developing the concepts of introverted and extroverted personality types, the collective unconscious—a part of the unconscious mind that incorporates

memories, instincts, and experiences common to all people—and archetypes, inherited unconscious ideas usually presented as thought patterns or as images. Jung's work has transformed psychology as well as religion, literature, and the esoteric fields. He was well known for his explorations of Eastern and Western philosophy, alchemy, astrology, and sociology, in addition to the occult, and he studied Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Gnosticism, Hermetics, and shamanism.[22]

Jung has been recognized as one of the first psychologists to relate yoga practices to psychology. Pulling psychological themes from the traditional yogic texts, his understandings include chakras. To Jung, the chakras were a means to achieving his ultimate philosophy: that we are in an ongoing process of realization through individuation. We expand our experiences in our dream world and everyday lives to embrace the personal and universal realms of consciousness—a philosophy that has been compared to tantrism. His embrace of the chakras, each of which he considered a mini universe, was coupled with his understanding of kundalini, the energy that activates the chakras.[23]

Fundamental to understanding Jung's fascination with the chakras is his belief that the unconscious—which many believed was merely subjective—is empirically real. To comprehend the unconscious, Jung determined that people needed to view their own individuality free of the opinions of society.

Within this context, Jung considered the chakras as symbols that could enable the development of individuality and the awareness of the unconscious.[24] As for kundalini, he compared it to the individual's descent into the unconscious.[25] Much of the following analysis is based on a PhD dissertation by Gary Seeman of the Pacific Graduate Institute based on a seminar series Jung presented in 1932 with J. W. Hauer, a German Indologist and religious studies writer, about kundalini yoga.[26]

According to Jung, each chakra presents a distinct worldview. A simple rendition of his interpretations of the chakras, which are woven together like a hero's journey by the ascending kundalini, follows:

First Chakra: Here our ego is awake and our self is asleep. Within this chakra kundalini is the possibility of a world that has not yet manifested.

Second Chakra: The second chakra is comparable to a journey into the underworld or the depths of the sea, which we enter when we no longer find the conventional world palatable.

Third Chakra: We arise from the sea of the second chakra to be initiated in the light and heat of the passions. Now we deal with our oppositional passions and can emerge from this chakra once we embrace the power of thought.

Fourth Chakra: This is the beginning of individuation. Our passions are tamed, and we learn objective love or empathy.

Fifth Chakra: We enter the realm of abstraction and psychical reality, where we can now make sense of synchronicity and dream symbolism. We begin transcending opposites to choose between alternatives.

Sixth Chakra: We can now begin to experience unity with God.

Seventh Chakra: Jung believed that the fully unitary consciousness of the sixth and seventh chakras is beyond our capability to understand or fully comprehend.

Jung made it clear that his interpretations were psychological and did not reflect the totality of kundalini's journey. In fact, he thought that the process of a kundalini yoga awakening could be dangerous to Westerners, like "foreign bodies" or "poisons" in the Western mind that had been raised to be logical and rational.[27] However, as modern chakra systems demonstrate, many chakra medicine paradigms now embrace the psychological functions of the chakras.

We now turn to modern mystics and masters of the chakra system, as well as the final kick-off movement of chakras into the stratosphere—the New Age. While not every modern mystic would consider themselves a member of this

movement, their detailed and colorful explanations of the energetic world have clearly evolved to embrace all aspects of being human—and divine.

I will begin by describing the New Age movement and then continue the theme of exploring the introduction of psychology into chakraology before presenting the basic beliefs of the best-known chakra experts of today.

The New Age: The Culminating Movement

All the movements and mentors mentioned previously in this part have culminated in the New Age, which we currently occupy. And nearly every subcategory of what we term the New Age embraces chakra systems and related concepts.

The New Age movement is a Western spiritual movement that developed in the second half of the twentieth century and continues today. It is a swirling embodiment of Eastern traditions including yoga, tantra, Buddhism, ayurveda, alchemy, ancient religions, traditional Chinese medicine, Zen, and more. It merges Theosophy, Sikhism, naturopathy, UFO-ology, and more.

In many ways, it owes its existence to a movement that started in the early nineteenth century. Called New Thought or Higher Thought, the philosophy promoted God as an "Infinite Intelligence" located everywhere. Actually an amalgam of various religious denominations, secular groups, and sets of beliefs that are metaphysical and self-empowering, New Thought proposed that "believing makes it so." It incorporated groups including Christian Science, Transcendental Meditation, Theosophy, and other movements, as well as religions including Religious Science, Unity Church, and the Church of Divine Science.

We find New Thought still alive today in the contemporary emphasis on positive thinking and the "law of attraction," the belief that we attract what we are thinking about.[28] These ideals actually emerged from New Thought thinkers who believed "thinking makes it so," leading to the mind-body movement promoting healing through belief.

Many New Thought communities incorporate East Indian (and, therefore, chakra medicine) teachings; so New Thought has served—and still serves—

as a conduit for integrating these mystical concepts in mainstream society.[29] And it is one of the many movements included in our part 8's discussions that opened the gateway to the New Age, the era in which chakra knowledge has been integrated into mainstream Western society.

The term "New Age" was coined in reference to the astrological Age of Aquarius, linked to the precession of the equinoxes, a precession being a change in the movement of Earth's axis. An equinox occurs when the planet's orbit and position relative to the sun cause the sun to pass directly over Earth's equator. During the equinoxes, which occur around March 20 and September 22, day and night are of equal length.

Each precession lasts 25,800 years and causes Earth's poles to shift over time. There are twelve constellations in the Western zodiac, and all cycle within a precession, which means that roughly every 2,150 years, the sun's position at the vernal equinox, in March—the equinox we are concerned about—moves in front of a different zodiac constellation.

According to New Age thought, we are leaving the Age of Pisces and entering the Age of Aquarius, though we don't know exactly when this will take place. One expert, Jean Meeus, a Belgian astronomer and mathematical luminary, places the movement from Aries and Pisces to 68 BCE, which means we will enter Aquarius in 2597. Other astrologers assert that we entered Aquarius in 2012.[30]

Those who testify to the belief in the upcoming Age of Aquarius believe we are making way for a new world, one devoted to love, unity, fellowship, and integrity. The Piscean Age is depicted as dark and violent, while the Aquarius era is seen as the opposite. The transition, however, is expected to be anything but peaceful, with turmoil replacing complacency and disintegrating systems making way for kindness.

Herein we see repetition of the Hindu belief in the four ages, or *yugas*, that we explored in chapter 5. As many Hindus believed, our current yuga, the fourth—called the Iron Age—is overwhelmingly destructive. And just as many Hindus do, New Age followers assert that we have a chance to turn this era around.[31]

The Hindus were not the only group predicting an intense and immense change. The Mayans and Egyptians suggested the same, among other cultures. Besides our obvious collective interest in finding a path through the dangerous woods of this yuga and into a clearing, the reason I discuss the New Age in this book is that it is, in many ways, the culmination of chakra knowledge, embracing almost every chakra-related concept we have chronicled through the ages.

As a spiritual movement, the New Age fuses Eastern and Western spiritual and mystical traditions, adding sprinkles of psychology, shamanism, self-help thinking, quantum physics, and holistic ideology. It incorporates astrology, alchemy, and animal magnetism and is at once monotheistic and pluralistic. From a New Age point of view, perhaps chakras have ascended in concept to the highest possible level: they are seen as mechanisms for achieving peace, inside and out.

As eclectic as the sources of inspiration and information are, New Age systems ultimately draw upon the light—the light of goodness, enrichment, and encouragement. Now let me introduce you to some of the bright lights that have initiated and furthered this movement.

Chakra Psychology: Christopher Hills

Christopher Hills, author of *Nuclear Evolution: Discovery of the Rainbow Body*, wrote in the last part of the twentieth century about human evolution and the evolution of consciousness.[32] He is best known for linking the chakras with personality issues, thus continuing the tradition of relating chakras to our psychological profile.

Hills's view is that chakras mediate a person's experience over time. Acknowledging that individuals tend to experience time more predominantly through one chakra than another, we can determine our personality traits based on the most prominently active chakra.[33]

Hills is credited with creating or at least popularizing the perception of the chakras related to an acronym: ROY G. BIV. This acronym tracks the chakra

colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet).[34] Hills depicted the chakric personalities in this way:

Sacral or Root Chakra: Deals with the immediate "now" and physical sensations. A person strong in this chakra is mainly concerned with physical inputs, sensations, and responses, believing they must gratify their needs immediately.

Spleen or Second Chakra: This chakra manages the future and is concerned with what is occurring in the present that sets the stage for tomorrow. People manifesting through this chakra can defer gratification for the good of their community.

Solar or Third Chakra: Time is linear within this chakra, and individuals can herein perceive how the past leads to the present and then onward to the future. Third chakra individuals are logical and intellectual. Joy is linked with knowledge here.

Heart or Fourth Chakra: For heart-based individuals, time can move back and forth, depending on emotional attachments or threats to personal security. Consciousness attaches to things such as food, money, and material objects, as well as love objects.

Throat or Fifth Chakra: The core of this chakra is the past, with strong fifth chakra personalities associating present affairs with the works of the past. These individuals tend to be conservative and traditional.

Brow or Sixth Chakra: The far-flung possibilities of the future grab sixth chakra individuals, with their bright and shiny intuitive faculties. While it's hard for these people to grasp logic, they are able to sense the extrasensory.

Crown or Seventh Chakra: All time exists simultaneously in this realm of timelessness, where imagination enables the knowing of patterns, symbols, and celestial matters. Super-mental activities are possible here.

Hills acknowledged that groups could sometimes find themselves in conflict if only a certain chakra type is supported by the group. Therefore, it's important to provide balance through complementary chakra types.[35]

Putting It All Together: Anodea Judith

Anodea Judith is considered one of the foremost contemporary experts on chakras, especially since the publication of her book *Wheels of Life*.[36] Her work blends Eastern and Western concepts, Jungian psychology, body-based therapy, childhood development theory, and metaphysics into chakra medicine.

Drawing from tantric theory in particular, Judith presents chakras as organizing centers for receiving, assimilating, and using life energies, enabling a journey toward consciousness. Gateways between various dimensions, the chakras each develop in a unique order (her theories on this matter are dispersed through Part 2) and influence our activities with the outside world. Because they lock memories and patterns within them, we can also work with our chakras to free ourselves of old, constricting patterns.[37]

Judith's chakra system, in brief, is as follows:

Chakra	Location	Color	Element	Purpose
First	Base of spine	Red	Earth	Survival
Second	Lower abdomen	Orange	Water	Emotions/sexuality
Third	Solar plexus	Yellow	Fire	Personal power/self-esteem/will
Fourth	Over the sternum	Green	Air	Love
Fifth	Throat	Blue	Sound	Communication/creativity
Sixth	Center of forehead	Indigo	Light	Clairvoyance/intuition/imagination
Seventh	Top of head	Violet	Thought	Transcendent consciousness [38]

Pathways for our journey toward a better life, chakras can be too open or blocked, often locking in issues while the chakras are developing, which they do in the order set out below. Judith ties each chakra to a particular right to

which we are entitled. Embracing these rights in relation to each chakra enables fluidity in the chakras and a loving life, and can help heal the challenges that have caused damage to the chakra.

These rights are activated sequentially, as are the chakras, a topic addressed in Part 2. I believe, however, that at any point of your life, you can embrace the birthright latent in each chakra.

Chakra One: Claim your right to be here. You have a right to have what is necessary for your life.

Chakra Two: Own your right to feel. If you can feel something, you can embrace your needs.

Chakra Three: Open your right to act. Ingrained in you is the personal power necessary to consciously act in a good way.

Chakra Four: Believe in your right to love and be loved. Why close down your heart and restrict your human desire to exchange love?

Chakra Five: Claim your right to speak and hear truth. You can trust in yourself and what you have to share.

Chakra Six: Assert your right to see. To see is to separate what is true from what is not. It also involves using your psychic abilities.

Chakra Seven: Embrace your right to know. You are inherently granted permission to the birthrights of information, truth, education, and knowledge.[39]

Spiritual Traditions Front and Center: Carolyn Myss

Dr. Carolyn Myss is a medical intuitive and author well-known for her revolutionary contributions to chakra knowledge. She believes that the human mind encodes thought, converts it into matter, and stores it in the body's chakras. According to Myss, our entire life has been downloaded into our chakras, making them powerful databases and tools for healing.

Myss's version of the chakras places them at traditional locations—the base, sacral area, solar plexus, heart, throat, brow, and crown—and colors

them red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet, respectively. Most interesting to me about Myss's ideas are the ways she has linked the chakras to many different archetypical understandings, including types of grace, which she considers extremely important as a means of addressing the raging psychic currents in the collective unconscious. She also relates the chakras to the sacraments of the Catholic Church and the sephiroth of the Kabbalah, among other associations. The sacraments allow the chakras (and therefore us) to interact with sacred power so we can gradually take back our own intrinsic power. You can see these sacraments in the next exercise, "The Seven Catholic Sacraments," and experience them yourself.

The sephiroth, which I describe in chapter 28, allow us to connect with aspects of the "true God" so we may walk straight spiritually. To reinforce the power of these connections, we must be willing to heal from any misdirection we have been involved in: to release the past, cleanse our spirit, and return to the present moment.

Following is my compilation of a few areas of Myss's work. I will first describe her basic beliefs about each chakra and then its relationship with a grace. Then I'll outline Myss's understanding of the power we hold within each chakra, as well as the sacrament and sephira or sephiroth that would enable us to grasp and correctly implement that power to transform our lives. (I have used the same versions of the names of the sephiroth elsewhere in this book.)

First Chakra

Representing our physical life, including work, family, and the everyday world, this chakra connects us to our tribe, the bonding clan. A tribe honors loyalty and unity and assumes that respect is the law.

Grace: The grace of reverence invites unity, leading to a deep sense of awe—a recognition of the source of life and our connection to it. Reverence is also the root of two types of intuition: one that enables our own survival and a second type that advances our spiritual life.

Power: "All is one," gained by merging this tribal chakra with the sacrament of baptism and the Malkuth sephira.

Second Chakra

Governing sexuality, finances, relationship, power, creativity, and more, this relationship center often determines the quality of our life.

Grace: The grace of piety enables us to sense when others (or we ourselves) need kindness or nurturing, calling for us to illuminate one another. It can lead to mercy for self and others.

Power: "Honor one another," the conclusion of the partnership chakra enabled by the sacrament of communion and the Yesod sephira.

Third Chakra

This is the center of our personal identity, governing a list of "selfs" such as self-esteem, self-respect, and sense of self. These qualities determine much of the health of our major organs.

Grace: The grace of understanding allows us to comprehend one another and be understood in return. Through it we can transcend matters at the personal level and penetrate to a deeper truth, which is sometimes simply common sense.

Power: "Honor oneself," achieved through blending the personal power chakra with the sacrament of confirmation and the Hod and Netzach sephiroth.

Fourth Chakra

The center of emotion, this chakra holds many ideas that are dear to us, including love, hopes, dreams, and wishes—as well as anger and depression.

Grace: The grace of fortitude acknowledges that our highest potential is actualized in service that embraces right livelihood. Fortitude enables the courage needed to make correct emotional choices for self and others, not only the choice to act, but also to deal with the consequences of our actions.

Power: "Love is divine power" merges the chakra of emotional power via the sacrament of marriage and the Tiphareth sephira.

Fifth Chakra

The fifth chakra is the center of choice, in which we receive and can share counsel.

Grace: The grace of counsel seeks truth, a truth that is universal and undiluted. It often appears as a prayerful request for divine assistance.

Power: Surrender of personal will to divine will, allowing this chakra to employ willpower through the sacrament of confession and the Chesed and Geburah sephiroth.

Sixth Chakra

The mental center, this chakra is home to an open mind and accessible intuition prepared to receive intellectual revelation. It is the space of the intellect, brain, mind, and intuition, woven together into the tapestry of your life.

Grace: The grace of knowledge is the pure form of revelation about the nature of the Divine. It is composed of information, active knowing, and gnosis: knowledge that appears through grace.

Power: "Seek only the truth" empowers the mindful with the sacrament of ordination and the Binah and Chokmah sephiroth.

Seventh Chakra

Our spiritual center, the seventh chakra enables us to discern fiction from nonfiction and follow the spiritual path true to self—and the Above.

Grace: Wisdom calls us to think deeply about our choices, to be greater than our smaller selves.

Power: "Live in the present moment" opens this chakra of the spirit through the sacrament of extreme unction and the Kether sephira.[40]

EXERCISE: **The Seven Catholic Sacraments**

The seven Catholic sacraments are ceremonies that evoke the sacred and serve as special occasions for experiencing God's grace. First I'll describe them, and then I'll lead you through an exercise I've developed to help you link them with the chakras, drawing upon Carolyn Myss's work.

Baptism: The blessing of a child or adult so they might know themselves as embraced by God.

Communion: Evoking the presence of Jesus for spiritual nourishment.

Confirmation: The ritual that underscores a mature commitment to Christ and a deepening of baptismal gifts.

Marriage: The public sign of union with another.

Confession: Also known as reconciliation, this sacrament allows us to receive God's unconditional forgiveness and calls us to do the same for others.

Ordination: Ceremony through which a new priest is allowed to provide the sacrament to others, proclaim good news, and serve others in holy manners.

Extreme Unction: The ritual of healing for physical, mental, and spiritual sickness.

Do you want to experience these sacraments in your own chakras and in your life? I invite you to focus on each chakra, breathe into it, and concentrate on the following ideas:

First Chakra: As you embrace the meaning of the sacrament of baptism, let yourself experience union with yourself, the world, and the Divine. You are embraced by God.

Second Chakra: The sacrament of communion invites nourishment by the Christ. You absorb the care and compassion you've been seeking.

Third Chakra: Accepting the gift of confirmation, you also more fully awaken your spiritual gifs.

Fourth Chakra: The sacrament of marriage invites you to enjoy all the love in your life—the bonds of union that are healthy and uplifting.

Fifth Chakra: Invoking the sacrament of confession, you allow yourself to surrender your will to divine will, receiving forgiveness for where you have erred and granting it to others as well.

Sixth Chakra: You are invited to experience the sacrament of ordination, accepting the fact that you are a holy messenger of the Divine.

Seventh chakra: The sacrament of extreme unction allows healing on all levels.

When you are through with this exercise, take a few deep breaths and allow yourself to continue in your life in a prayerful way, grateful for all that you are and have been given.

A NASA Scientist Describes Energy: Barbara Ann Brennan

A former research scientist for NASA, Barbara Ann Brennan is now an author and teacher. She has studied and worked with the human energy field for decades, and her analysis of human energetic structures includes chakras, the auric field, and energetic planes.

Brennan considers the chakras less as organs of yogic consciousness than as etheric, astral, and mental vortexes. As such, they are transformers that receive and process cosmic energy, enabling the functioning of an individual's consciousness and psycho-physical makeup. Brennan describes two rows of chakras that are arranged in pairs at the front and rear of the spine. The frontal chakras are associated with feeling, the rear with will, and the upper three with the intellect.[41]

Planes of Reality and the Auric Fields

From a broader perspective, we are composed of layers of energy and the consciousness of a divine spark. This spark exists on higher planes of reality as well as the apparent one. These planes are linked by the aura, the medium through which our creative impulses are brought into physical reality. Our consciousness is also able to stair-step upward through the auric field.

There are three main planes of reality, which subdivide in such a way that every label matches one occurring within the auric field. These planes of reality are composed in this way, from highest to lowest:

spiritual plane

Ketheric Template Level: Expresses higher concepts

Celestial Level: Expresses higher feelings

Etheric Template Level: Mitigates higher will

astral plane

Composed of gradations of light, which are experienced as strong emotions extending beyond the self.

physical plane

Mental Level: Enables thinking

Emotional Level: Guides personal emotions

Etheric Level: Runs physical sensation

Physical Level: Manages physical functioning [42]

The names of the various auric fields correlate with those of the planes of reality, as you can see in Illustration 92, the field itself being made of plasma: tiny, perhaps subatomic particles that operate like a fifth type of matter.[43]

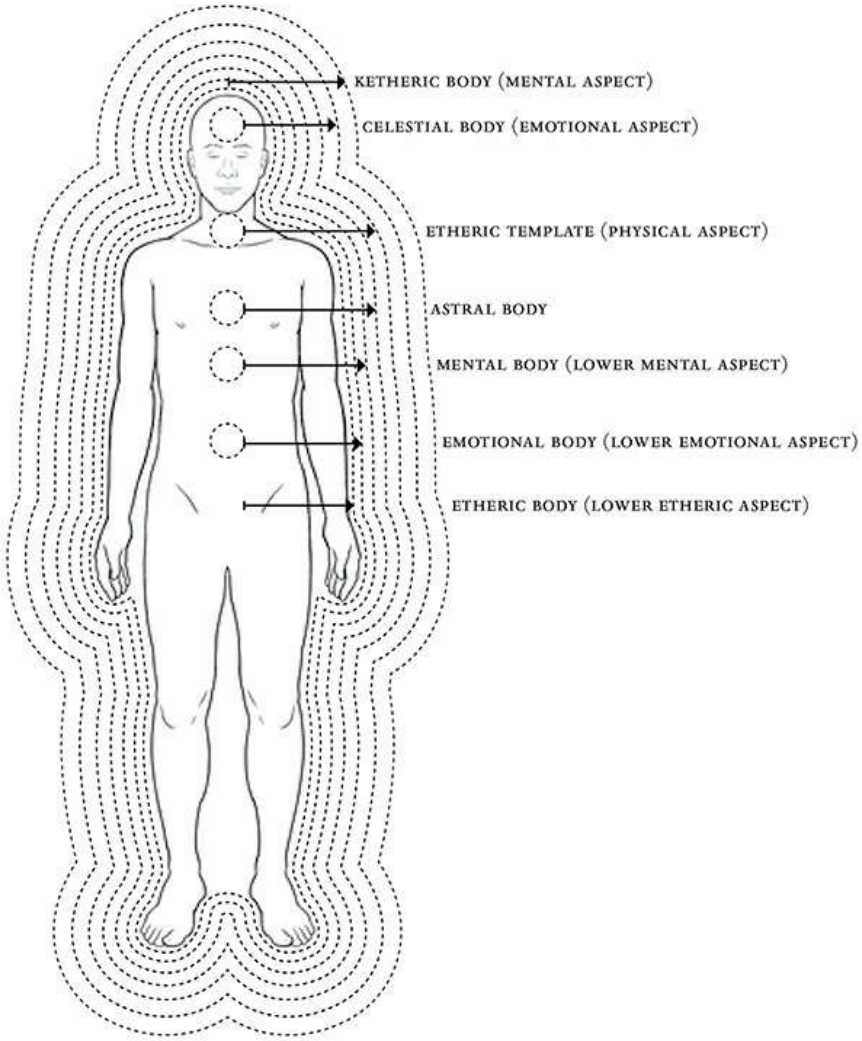
KETHERIC BODY (MENTAL ASPECT)
CELESTIAL BODY (EMOTIONAL ASPECT)
ETHERIC TEMPLATE (PHYSICAL ASPECT)
ASTRAL BODY
MENTAL BODY (LOWER MENTAL ASPECT)
EMOTIONAL BODY (LOWER EMOTIONAL ASPECT)
ETHERIC BODY (LOWER ETHERIC ASPECT)

ILLUSTRATION 92—BRENNAN'S PLANES OF REALITY AND AURIC FIELD LAYERS: The seven basic layers of the auric field graduate from the body. Each is linked with one of the seven basic chakras and also one of the seven planes of existence, which are organized into three basic categories: spiritual, astral, and physical. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Brennan's Chakras

Brennan links each of the seven basic chakras to one of the auric layers. As Illustration 93 shows, all but the top chakras spin into the front and back sides of the body and can be divided into three main categories. Basically, a chakra receives incoming energy, which it then disseminates as outgoing secondary energies. From there the energy is sent into the nadis, then the nervous

system, the endocrine system, and the blood. The major chakras are accessible for this process, as are a multitude of secondary chakras, as well as the acupuncture points. These entry points also interact with the auric field, enabling us to exchange energy with the outside world.[44]

In addition to the major seven chakras, Brennan is able to perceive an eighth and ninth chakra, which correlate to a cosmic plane that lies beyond the ketheric plane.[45]

An overview of Brennan's chakra system, including the major chakras and the secondary ones, is as follows:

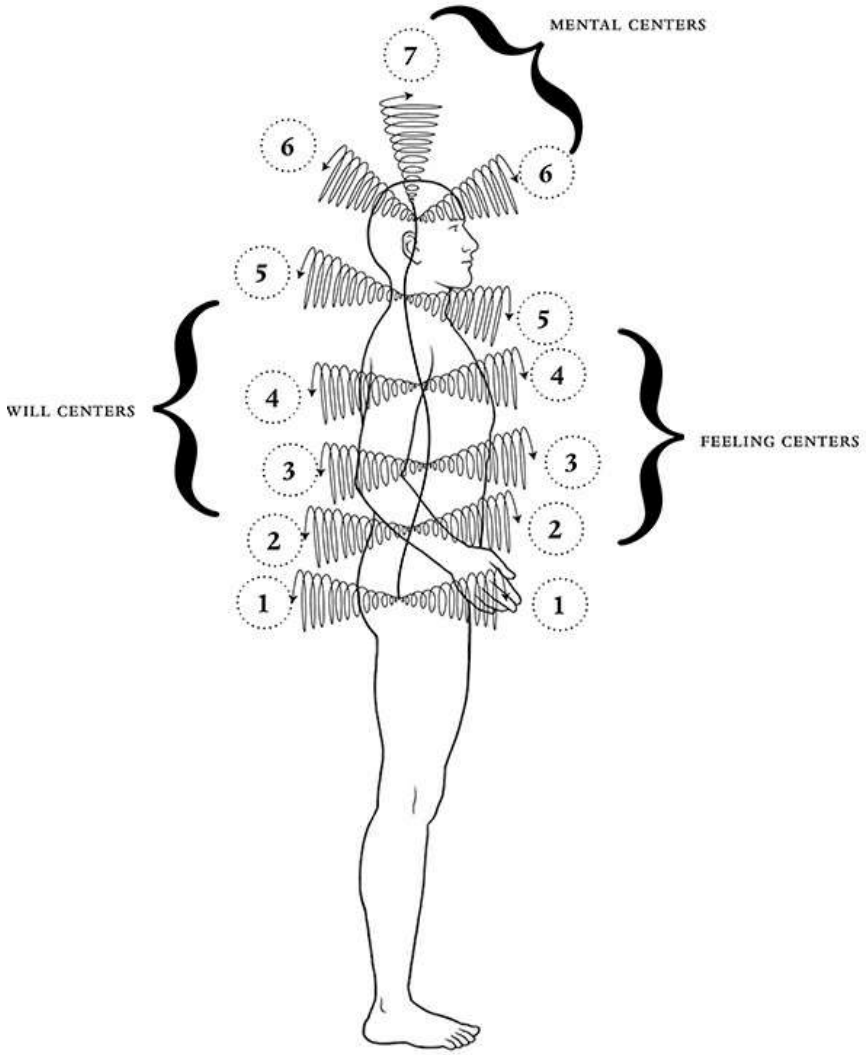

ILLUSTRATION 93—BRENNAN'S VIEW OF THE CHAKRAS: There are seven basic chakras. The middle five emanate in the front and back sides of the body. All chakras

belong to one of three classifications: will, feeling, and mental centers. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

CHAKRA	LOCATION	VORTEXES	BODILY AREAS AFFECTED
Seventh	Crown/pineal	972 violet-white	Upper brain, right eye
Sixth	Forehead/pituitary	96 indigo	Lower brain, left eye, ears, nose, nervous system
Fifth	Throat/thyroid	16 blue	Bronchial and vocal, mechanics, lungs, alimentary canal
Fourth	Heart/thymus	12 green	Heart, blood, vagus nerve, circulatory system
Third	Solar plexus/pancreas	10 yellow	Digestive organs, nervous system
Second	Sacral area/gonads	6 orange	Reproductive system
First	Base/adrenals	4 red	Spinal column, kidneys [46]

According to Brennan, the chakras in the cosmic plane are both located above the head. They are crystalline and composed of high vibrations, with the eighth chakra or level dealing with substance and the ninth with form. The eighth chakra seems fluid, and the ninth operates like a crystalline template of everything below it.[47]

Brennan also perceives twenty-one minor chakras located at points where the energy strands cross fourteen times. They are found in these locations: one on front of each ear, one above each breast, one where the clavicles meet, one in the palm of each hand, one in the sole of each foot, one just behind each ear, one related to each gonad, one near the liver, one connected with the stomach, two connected with the spleen, one behind each knee, one near the thymus gland, and one near the solar plexus. These are all about three inches in diameter and located one inch away from the body.[48]

East Is West: Donna Eden and David Feinstein

Donna Eden and David Feinstein, authors of *Energy Medicine*, have outlined nine energy systems that affect the body and mind.[49] These are the meridians,

the auric field, the basic grid, the Celtic Weave, the Five Rhythms, the Triple Warmer, the radiant circuits, the electrics, and the chakras, all of which interact to create our truly amazing subtle bodies and the quality of our lives. Their cosmology combines Eastern and Western teachings to explain how they integrate and support us. I will describe their chakra system last, after introducing you to their other systems.

The Meridians: As I have already introduced in this book, the meridians carry vital energy and provide balance, regulating every physiological system.

The Auric Field: This multilayered shell emanates from the body and interacts with the external environment, operating like a two-way antenna that brings energy into the chakras and sends energy back out. As Eden intuitively perceived, there are seven fields within the aura, which are nested like Russian dolls and interact with the seven chakras. They have a similar appearance to Illustration 92.

The Basic Grid: This is your body's foundational system. It looks like a matrix.

The Celtic Weave: This is the interwoven pattern formed by the body's energies, which spin, spiral, and crisscross. In the East it is called the "Tibetan energy ring." In yogic traditions it is represented by two curved lines intersecting seven times to encase the chakras. It is also the crossing-over of the ida, pingala, and sushumna for the path of kundalini. Eden intuitively perceives it as a single unit of interwoven, spiraling figure-eight patterns both within and around the body.

The Five Rhythms: All essential energies, including the chakras and auric field, are influenced by an overarching energy system that is cyclical. It is categorized by five movements, each marching to its own drummer. These are linked to the five elements of water, wood, fire, earth, and metal, as well as five seasons: winter, spring, summer, Indian

summer, and autumn. We each have our own rhythm, and we also respond to the changing rhythms of the seasons.

The Triple Warmer: This meridian links all parts of our immune system.

The Radiant Circuits: This system is more primitive than the meridians and distributes energy to where it is most needed.

The Electrics: This energy emanates from the electrical dimensions of our energetic systems. The electrics connect all energetic systems via the body's electricity.

The Chakras: Eden and Feinstein work with a seven-chakra system, linking the chakras to the organs in the body. The chakras also determine aspects of our personality, and each serves one of seven universal principles. From the bottom to the top chakra, these are survival, creativity, identity, love, expression, comprehension, and transcendence. Every emotionally significant event is imprinted in our chakras, qualifying them as memory banks.[50] Each chakra emanates energy through the seven nested auric fields.

According to Eden and Feinstein, chakras that spin clockwise move energies outward to envelop other energies. Those that spin counterclockwise move energy inward, drawing in other energies. Each layer can spin in its own direction depending on what is occurring. While they relate the chakras to the traditional colors, red through white, Eden sees many other colors in the chakras. For instance, she perceives that gold instead of red in the first chakra highlights a person with inherent goodness. She sometimes finds the second chakra filled with indigos and purples instead of orange, and pink and gold are as familiar to the heart chakra as is green.

A brief description of Eden and Feinstein's beliefs about the chakras follows:

First or Root Chakra: Foundation of our drives and our tribal nature. Responsible for sexuality.

Second or Womb Chakra: Sacred vessel of imagination and the creative impulse. A person's life color (a specific hue representing their personality) can be seen here.

Third or Solar Plexus Chakra: Site of personal ego and energies creating personal identity.

Fourth or Heart Chakra: Chalice of connection, joy, and sorrow.

Fifth or Throat Chakra: Invites expression of information from all the chakras.

Sixth or Pituitary Chakra: Center of thought and abstraction. Here we can gain access to a psychic plane that transcends this time and space.

Crown or Pineal Chakra: Links with the heavens and cosmos.[51]

The next sections feature chakra systems that expand beyond the physical body. Barbara Brennan's system proposed two additional chakras, located outside the body proper, as have systems from other cultures. The following chakra systems are noted for their modern presentation of these additional chakras. A few of these systems also draw upon Eastern medicine in their chakra systems.

Chakras Around the Body: My Own Twelve-Chakra System

Yet another contemporary chakra system is my own twelve-chakra model, which I have described in several other books. It is based on the classical Hindu chakra system, in which the lower seven chakras are depicted much as they are in Part 2, but I also include five additional chakras that are found outside of the physical body. Though cultures around the world have described chakras extending beyond the body, the idea was relatively new to most people, and sometimes shocking to readers, when my first book came out in 1996.

The external five chakras are located above the head, below the feet, and around the body. Following is a description of the higher five chakras, which

are also featured in Illustration 94.

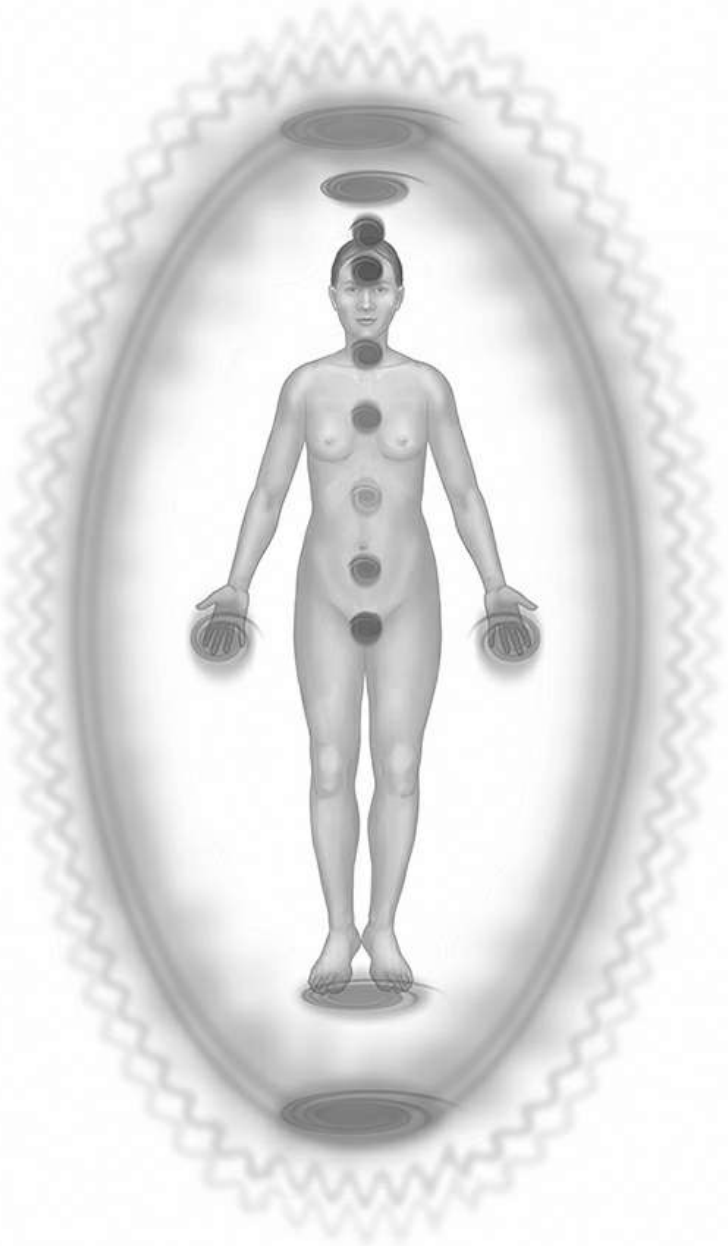

ILLUSTRATION 94—THE TWELVE-CHAKRA SYSTEM: My twelve-chakra system features twelve chakras. (The twelfth chakra is entirely in the field; the eleventh chakra is located around the hands and feet and also in the energetic field.) Twelve auric layers, which aren't shown specifically, are surrounded by an energy egg, which is composed of three layers. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Eighth Chakra: Found just above the head, this black or silver chakra links to the body via the thymus gland. Appearing as a small point, it

expands to host several additional energy bodies: the Akashic Records is a storage center for everything ever seen and done; the Shadow Records contain our regrets; and the Book of Life reveals situations the way the Divine would see them.

Ninth Chakra: Located one and a half feet above the head, this gold chakra connects to the body through our diaphragm and houses the symbols of our soul. These "spiritual genetics" generate physical reality, including our physical genes. This chakra also reflects our soul's purpose.

Tenth Chakra: Found a foot and a half below the feet, this chakra is often colored brown or earth-toned and correlates to the center of the bones. As our link to the natural world, it accesses elemental energy, which it sends into the body through the feet. Within it are our soul and genealogical histories.

Eleventh Chakra: Surrounding the body, this rose-colored chakra, which relates to our connective tissue, is most heavily concentrated around the hands and the feet. Its purpose is to transmute physical and supernatural forces so we can direct them at will.

Twelfth Chakra: Around the eleventh chakra and the entirety of the body, this clear energy center is similar to our spiritual skin. I see it as the outer horizon of our human self and perceive it connecting to the body through thirty-two secondary chakras.

The Energy Egg: Just outside of the twelfth chakra is the energy egg, a three-layer sheath that regulates the linkage between the spiritual realms and the physical body. The outermost layer of this egg opens to divine energy, the middle layer transfers energy between parallel realities, and the internal layer monitors the physical body.[52]

Additional Points, Chakras, and the Spine

In my twelve-chakra system I describe twenty spiritual points, which are equal to etheric chakras. Each is linked to a point in the spine, manages a

certain ideal, and operates exactly as do the chakras; these points can be worked on with the same practices as the main chakras.

Following is my outline of the points. Chakras one through twelve are also associated with vertebrae. Starting at the bottom of the coccyx, these chakra points move up the spine before point 13 picks up at the second lumbar vertebra. In addition to these thirty-two points is a thirty-third principle. Though it isn't an actual chakra or point, it is located on a spinal point. It functions as an overriding spiritual principle that, when activated, directs all the points toward loving ends.

Point (Spiritual Chakra)	Spinal Area	Vertebra
13: Yin	Lumbar	Second
14: Yang		First
15: Balance of polarities	Thoracic	Twelfth
16: Balance of similarities		Eleventh
17: Harmony		Tenth
18: Free will and freedom		Ninth
19: Kundalini		Eighth
20: Mastery		Seventh
21: Abundance		Sixth
22: Clarity		Fifth
23: Knowledge of good and bad		Fourth
24: Creation		Third
25: Manifestation		Second
26: Alignment		First
27: Peace	Cervical	Seventh
28: Wisdom		Sixth
29: Enjoyment		Fifth
30. Forgiveness		Fourth
31. Faith		Third

32. Grace	Second
33. Principle of love	First

David Furlong: Adding an Earth Chakra

Author and energy expert David Furlong adds an eighth chakra located under the feet to explicitly help us link with the earth. Furlong reexamined the chakras from a cross-cultural perspective, looking for patterns in cultures including the Chinese, Tibetan, ancient Egyptian, Celtic, shamanistic, Kabbalistic, and more. What emerged were eight newly assigned colors, among other ideas.

Furlong assigns the following colors to the chakras:

Crown: Magenta

Brow: Violet

Throat: Yellow

Heart: Blue

Solar plexus: Orange

Sacral: Turquoise

Base: Red

Root (Earth Chakra): Green

This last chakra, the earth chakra, which Furlong also calls the root chakra, links us to the ground through our feet, which can connect us to the vibrational energies of the earth. Besides reinforcing our bond with the planet, it also affiliates us with our ancestry and origins, explaining our lineage and past lives.[53]

Katrina Raphaell: Transpersonal Chakras Make a Stand

Noted crystal expert Katrina Raphaell locates several additional chakras that are transpersonal in nature, often considered newly available to humanity in order to elevate our consciousness. Her system involves the transmission of higher light so it might integrate into the physical body.

Raphaell adds five additional chakras to the traditional seven, which are depicted in Illustration 95. To her information I have added additional expert insights on Raphaell's system.

Earth Star Chakra: Located in the nerve endings on the sole of the feet. Moving with us as we travel, it serves as a grounding cord for our light body to connect to the center of the earth. Allows us to connect with our multidimensional selves.

Hara/Navel Chakra: Found at the navel. Resonates with divine will to help us achieve our purpose. Additional hara systems are featured after this discussion.

Causal Chakra: Found four inches behind the head. Allows us to receive divine inspiration.

Soul Star Chakra: Located six inches above the head, where the Christ consciousness, or highest order of energy, translates into the heart of humanity. When active, this chakra aligns us with our soul as well as all higher energies in the universe. It also serves as the bridge between impersonal essence and personal reality.

Stellar Gateway: Found twelve inches above the head. Opens to the Christ conscious-ness and our direct line to the Divine Source, allowing access to infinite energy and a spiritual exchange. When this chakra is open, the incoming energy nourishes the soul star chakra.[54]

The Subtranspersonal Chakras

Yet other esoteric professionals add a list of subtranspersonal chakras to the transpersonal chakras featured in systems like those we have just covered, as well as those listed in the Hindu tantra, tantric Buddhism, and Taoism systems. Yoga practitioner Noeli Naimi of Spain describes five such chakras, found between the feet and the earth star chakra, which she believes is the lowest of the five. (Illustration 95 shows Raphaell's system. Naimi would insert four additional chakras between the feet and the earth star chakra.) She describes them in this way, from closest to the body to farthest away:

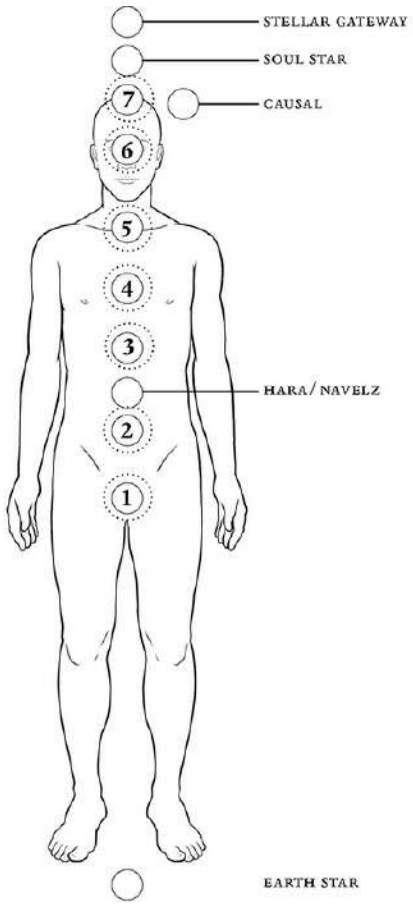

ILLUSTRATION 95—TRANSPERSONAL CHAKRAS: To the traditional seven chakras (numbered on the illustration), many contemporary esotericists add five additional transpersonal chakras that are now active to assist humanity in becoming more conscious. Other esotericists add even more transpersonal chakras. See the insert for a color version of this image. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Incarnation Point Chakra: Found a few inches below the feet, it provides practical implementation for the soul's journey.

Incarnator Chakra: About sixteen inches below the feet, this chakra connects to our ancestry, tribe, and clan.

Subpersonal Leadership Chakra: An arm's length below the feet, it represents the anima, or female archetype.

Earth-Centering Chakra: A bit beyond an arm's length below the feet, it ties us to the archaic earth energy.

Earth Star Chakra: In this system, the earth star is two arm's lengths below the feet, through which we exchange energy with the earth goddess.[55]

The Hara Line

The hara line is a reflection of both Eastern and Western theories. It is called the microcosmic orbit in the West, or sometimes the small and large heavenly cycle. Hara line energy work is also based in the discipline of qigong, where the energy pathway is directed in a circle rather than only upward. Structurally, the hara line is perceived as a line of energy or light that expands into a pillar of light, sometimes called an auric vertical power current. It is not the same as kundalini rising but is often affected by the spirals of kundalini movement, and sometimes it becomes more active when the kundalini awakens the main vertical current in the body. In many systems the hara line is located in the astral (emotional) body. When this is the case, the seven in-body chakras and the auric field are considered part of the etheric body.

The hara line is centered in a chakra called the dantian, the spark of chi we were born with. The dantian is known as a field of elixir, underscoring the interpretation of chi as a magical life force that the dantian stores and moves through the body. It is actually located about two-and- a-half inches below the navel and is one-and-a-half inches in diameter. It is often tied into our soul purpose; that is, we are "given" as much chi as we need to accomplish our spiritual purpose. It vibrates uniquely in accordance with our individual soul and connects us to the earth in this frequency. If we change its vibration, our life transforms.

Because it is the reserve of our initial chi energy, any issues in this area will create reactions. Dysfunction can cause an exaggerated desire to control others or ourselves, as well as submissiveness, bullying, lack of direction, and more.

Structurally, the hara line appears in the form of a laser-like line of energy that runs through the body to the center of the earth. This line actually splits

at the dantian, so there are three lines that run into the earth. Two of them exit through the legs, with the left leg containing the grounding and umbilicus functions and the right leg containing the identity and creation functions. The third line drops straight down from the body's trunk through the first chakra.

The third line makes yet another three-way split at the neck. Two lines exit through the arms and hands while the central line, called the axis, continues upward. Three feet above the head it taps into what is usually labeled as the ninth chakra or individuation point. Wherever there is distortion, a split, or disharmony, we find our personality or ego at cross-purposes with our soul purpose. I have shared my own interpretation of the hara line and these primary lines and splits in Illustration 96.

Again, the hara line is linked with its own set of transpersonal or subpersonal chakras. There are several systems that outline exactly which chakras are included in the hara line. Here are two examples.

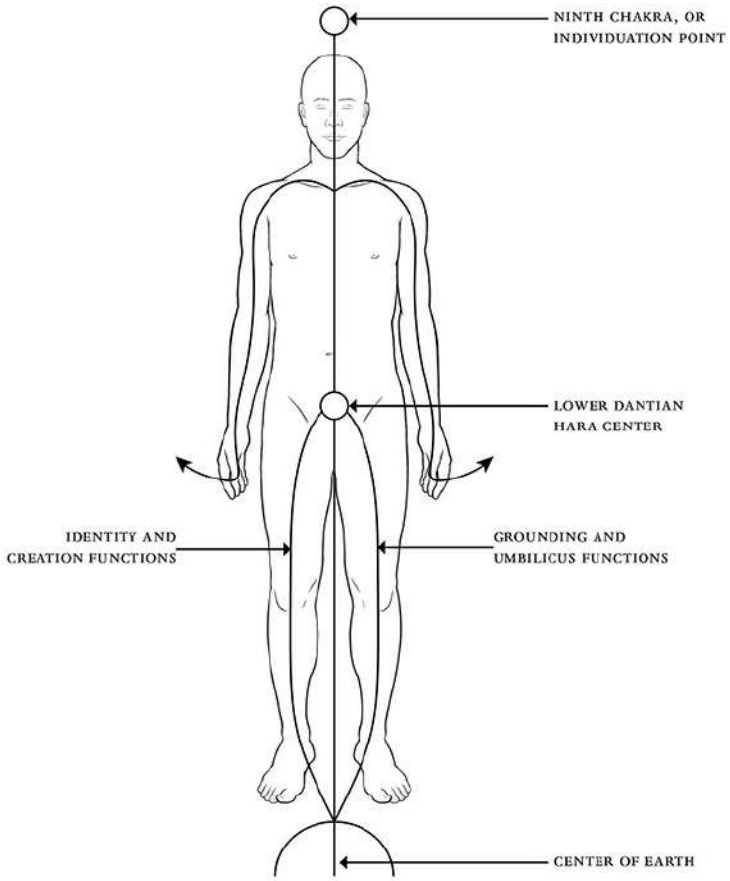

ILLUSTRATION 96—THE HARA LINE CHAKRAS: This description of the hara line chakras is my own interpretation of the basic hara line. Along the line are also the main seven chakras as well as several transpersonal chakras. The arrows show how the hara energy flows through the arms and out the hands. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

Hara Line Example 1: Transpersonal and Subpersonal Chakras

This section describes one example of the hara line flow. Many of these chakra names have already been covered in this chapter.

The Individuation Point, or Ninth Chakra: Known as the transpersonal chakra, it links us with the energy of unity above and the physical reality of separateness below. This point appears as a small funnel. The larger end, about one-third inch in diameter, points down and over the head. This is our connection with the Absolute.

The Soul Seat: Located near the hollow of the throat, within it lies our desire for connection. This center is also called the high heart, and it links to our silver cord
in the back of the throat; the silver cord connects our soul to our body.

The Hara Center, or Dantian: Already described.

The Earth Chakra: Known as a subpersonal chakra, it is below the feet and receives energy through the chakras in the feet. This chakra roots us to the earth's core and its EMFs. It creates an energetic bridge to the earth that enables us to anchor into the physical plane. Because of this chakra, our lives are recorded in the matrix of the earth star chakra described earlier, as are the other four subpersonal chakras located below the first chakra and before the earth star chakra.

At the end of our lives we disconnect from the earth star chakra and rise through the conduit of light composing the hara line, passing through all chakras as we journey upward. After arriving at the seventh chakra, we perceive the light of the soul star as a white tunnel, and we exit to higher dimensions.[56]

Hara Line Example 2: The Microcosmic Orbit Version

There are typically four components to the microcosmic orbit version of the hara line. This version requires interplay with the microcosmic orbit chakras, of which there are thirteen; the Governing Vessel, which runs up the back of the body; the conception vessel, which rises up the front of the body; and Earth Links, already identified as the grounding and umbilical functions of the hara passing through the left leg and the identity and creation functions that travel down the right leg.

Here are further explorations of these four aspects of the hara line.

hara line chakras

The hara line has its own set of thirteen chakras, sometimes called the microcosmic orbit chakras. These are described in this way:

Earth Chakra: Below the feet and in the surface of the earth. Colored black, it anchors us into the earth.

Grounding Chakra: At the soles of the feet, this chakra is brown and grounds our life purpose in reality.

Movement Chakras: Behind both knees, these chakras are tan and dark green and direct us toward fulfilling our life purpose.

Perineum Chakra: Between the vagina and the anus, it is ruddy brown and opens to the earth chi life force, which is then distributed through the hara center.

Hara Center, or Dantian: As described, found two-and-a-half inches below the navel and just above the sacral chakra. It is amber and connects our will to live with the earth energy and enables generation of our soul purpose.

Diaphragm Chakra: Just above the solar plexus at the diaphragm, it is olive green and clears obstructions to meeting our life purpose.

Thymus Chakra: Between the high heart and the thymus, this aqua chakra links the hara line and emotional body to the kundalini and etheric subtle body. It connects our emotions to our physical self, enables a strong immune system, and holds our will to incarnate.

Causal Body Chakra: At the base of the skull, this silver-blue and blue-violet chakra transforms nonphysical light into consciousness and determines our mental will to meet our soul purpose.

Vision Chakras: At the pupils of both eyes, it is gray and silver and enables us to visualize our needs.

Individuation Point, Sometimes Called the Transpersonal Point or Ninth Chakra: Located an arm's length above the head. This gold and white chakra connects us to the universe but also separates us from the universal source to give us a sense of self.

the governing and conception vessels

Working in conjunction with the hara line chakras, these two meridians give rise to the flow of hara energy, setting up the microcosmic orbit. The Governing Vessel starts at the perineum chakra and travels up the spinal column and the back of the body, moving in a straight line over the head and down the face, ending at the center depression of the upper lip.

The conception vessel starts at the center of the lower lip, journeys down the front of the body, cuts through the hara chakra, and ends at the perineum. These two straight energies are not connected naturally but when linked through the hara line, they activate a circular flow that sets up the orbiting energy called the microcosmic orbit.

the earth links

The four earth channels, which run through the legs, work in these ways:

Grounding (Left Leg): Provides confidence, strength, and security.

Umbilical (Left Leg): Gives us nourishment; when it is weak, we can become suicidal.

Creation (Right Leg): Ensures self-empowerment and the ability to make things happen.

Identity (Right Leg): Reflects our sense of self and our ability to relate to others.[57]

EXERCISE: **Strengthening Your Hara Line**

What can you do to bolster your hara line?

Ancient cultures used the antakarana symbol, shown below, to smooth the flow of energy in the microcosmic orbit. You can imagine the symbol while meditating or print it out and pin it somewhere you can see it frequently. The latter exercise will remind you to constantly boost your hara line.

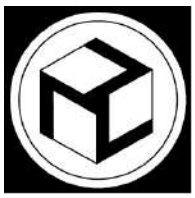

ILLUSTRATION 97—THE ANTAKARANA SYMBOL: This symbol has been used for centuries as a way of balancing out the hara line. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT

It can also be helpful to sketch the symbol with your finger on the palm of your hand, in the air, on a part of the body, or over a chakra, focusing on a healing or manifesting goal.[58]

Chakra Changes Over Time

There have been dozens if not hundreds of shifts in the perceptions of the chakras over time. What might we see if we compare the chakric roots in the Upanishads, the main ideas from Tibetan tantra, and the more modern assertions of Arthur Avalon, C. W. Leadbeater, and Anodea Judith? As Michelle Belanger points out in her book *The Psychic Energy Code*x, we would discover a true "coming of age" in chakra medicine, form emerging from basic truths. Psychic experiences, as well as other subtle phenomena, aren't exclusive to any specific religion; rather, they are universally available abilities. Therefore, all people—as ordinary as we are—can develop spiritual capabilities.[59]

It's important to see that chakra models have continually changed—if only to underline our right to transform as well. Chakra systems portrayed in the Upanishads between 700 and 200 BCE described only four main chakra

centers—the navel, heart, throat, and head—each related to various stages of dreaming and wakefulness. As we turn the corner and enter the Common Era, we find Tibetan tantra chakra systems recognizing four or five chakras, or "nadi wheels," and sometimes up to nine chakras. The spine of the four main chakras—navel, heart, throat, and head—remains constant, but chakras are now associated with colors and more specific meanings.

In the early twentieth century Sir Arthur Avalon set the chakra number at seven—although, I believe, a bit arbitrarily. He did, however, equip us with modern bells and whistles, discussing how the chakras related to nerve plexuses and more. Beautifully, he retained the spiritual mystery that has always surrounded the chakras: their relationship to lotuses and mystical meanings.

If we line Avalon's proposals next to Leadbeater's, we find similarities but also differences. Seven is still the magic number, but Leadbeater takes the chakra spine out of alignment and adds a spleen chakra on the left side of the body. While Avalon's associated colors are primary, Leadbeater's are artistic blends and blurs of various spectrums. At the highest level of performance the heart chakra is golden, rather than the standard green of Avalon's system. The coccygeal, or first, chakra is red and orange, not only red.

Judith's chakra system is more closely aligned to Avalon's, although she contemporarizes the chakras to fit our current needs. Gone are some of Leadbeater's colorful interpretations; we return to something basic, like the rainbow, but we are also invited to use our chakras more thoroughly. Let us employ our fifth chakra for communication and our sixth for imagination.[60]

As you can see, what is considered true about the chakras is a matter of timing and perspective. And who knows where we will go from here?

We have visited with many well-known greats who continued the maturation of chakra knowledge from ancient times, starting with Sir Arthur Avalon and including Rudolf Steiner and Carl Jung. These and other Westerners furthered the spread of chakra medicine into Western culture, which was then

finally caught up like dandelion seeds in the swirl of the New Age and transplanted nearly everywhere.

With the emergence of the New Age—a collection of Eastern and Western thought—new voices spoke into the world, including Anodea Judith, Barbara Brennan, Carolyn Myss, and even myself. Chakras have truly come of age.

Where will we go from here? That is the question that prompted part 9, which takes us in two very important directions as we conclude our chakra adventure. Into the natural world we go, and then…into the future!

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Part 9

Chakras Et Cetera

Natural and Unusual Chakras

> Surely a man needs a closed place wherein he may strike root and, like a seed, become. But also he needs a great Milky Way above him and the vast sea spaces, though neither stars nor ocean serve his daily needs.
>
> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Our chakra journey to this point has been extensive. We've visited cultures around the world and from antiquity to the present. We've entered all manner of sanctuaries for chakra knowledge, ranging from scientific laboratories and psychologists' offices to jungle huts and desert caves. Our itinerary might feel complete, but we are not quite through yet. We have two more essential destinations to cover.

Our first stopover is nature itself. We know that as humans, we are as much a part of nature as the animals, the planets, and the stars. And, in fact, the creatures, heavenly bodies, and elements of the natural world are also part of the universe of chakra medicine, each with its own distinctive subtle energy characteristics. In chapter 33, "Chakras in Nature," we focus on the energies of the heavenly body we all dwell upon, looking at the planetary energy lines and chakras of planet Earth.

Next, a special section highlights our beloved friends, the animals. Just as our human chakra system enables us to touch the stars and live on this good green earth, you'll discover that the same is true for animals.

We will take the final odyssey in this book's last chapter. Are you ready for some time travel? Chapter 24 is devoted to the future—to the chakra medicine concepts that are moving us into the next century. This time-traveling expedition will leave you marveling at the new and unusual chakras that are mapping our way into tomorrow. And I have a reason for unveiling these new ideas in the last chapter of the book: I want you to keep speculating about chakras as your journey continues.

That's right: I want your imagination afire, your thoughts tipping toward the next horizon, and your heart yearning for even greater knowledge. In the end, chakra medicine concepts and practices are about becoming what we really are: star stuff. The study of chakras is a never-ending storyline, and you and I are the ones writing it.

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Chakras in Nature

EARTH LAUGHS IN flowers.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Many metaphysicians believe that the earth is a sentient being, a living organism that has its own spirit, soul, and mind. When the earth is angry, there is an earthquake; when it's happy, it smiles in rainbows.

These same people assure us that the earth is also interactive. Of course, we know this to be true from a scientific point of view. Do we not eat the earth's food, drink its waters, and return to its dust upon our death? But people and cultures across time have also determined a more romanticized relationship, describing the planet as our mother and ourselves as her children, as are all the living beings of the world, including the animals. In addition, the stars and skies above interact with the earth, forming a multifaceted cosmology that seemingly lives and breathes.

Most of this chapter is about the earth, which many of us perceive as a living being, whether we are conscious of it or not. When mud swallows our shoes, she is slowing us down. When flowers bloom, we are invited to laugh along with her, decked out for the occasion in our own colors.

Serious scientists usually scoff at this simple thought—that the earth is a being—although our ancestors assumed hers was a living presence. It is telling that many contemporary individuals and groups are revisiting the age-old belief that the earth is alive—that, in fact, she exhibits a subtle energy anatomy, pervasive and intricate, comparable to our own.

Over the last few hundred years, many individuals have created earth-based chakra systems. Some believe these energy centers exist because the planet is conscious. Others point to a fact we are sure of: everything is made of energy—why, then, wouldn't the earth have energy centers as we do? Either

perspective describes an earth replete with energetic grids, many of which can be measured; for the purpose of our study, we observe that earth chakras often develop at some of the grid's intersecting lines.

The view that this planet we call home contains vortexes of subtle energy, as we do, is so widespread that there are dozens of earth-based chakra systems, too many to cover in one chapter, so here I will feature a few of the more popular ones. I'll also include topics that often pop up in relation to earth-based chakras, including various mythologies and plot lines that relate to some of the sacred sites often associated with earthly chakra points.

We will also delve into a discussion encompassing many important questions: What does the potential existence of earth-based chakras mean to you? What might you accomplish if you recognized these chakra points, those found around the world and those near where you live? Can earth chakras become blocked the way human chakras can? If so, what happens if you clear them? What occurs if you conduct your own chakra medicine work via an earth-based chakra? Two short exercises are seeded in this chapter to help you attune to greater as well as local earth energies.

In addition to exploring the chakra system of the earth, our home, we will also take a brief journey into the sky—into the heavens above, where we'll examine the energetic connections between the planets and the earth through the insights of Rudolf Steiner, esoteric extraordinaire, whom we met in chapter 32. And we'll also knock on the door of our best friends, the animals, exploring their chakra system.

In the end, you might find yourself deliberately looking for chakras in your area or perhaps deciding to travel to a famous chakra site. You might examine the skies for chakra openings or want to perform chakra medicine for your precious companion animal. No matter what you end up concluding or doing, educating yourself about chakras in the natural world will increase your awareness of the energy beneath your feet and how it affects you.

Chakras and the Earth's Songlines

Whether they called them dragon lines, songlines, ley lines, or vortexes, our ancestors spoke of energies in the earth that were sacred to their cultures, pointing to invisible lines of energy or matrixes that often converged around special natural areas or sacred sites.

To the indigenous Australian aboriginals these were songlines: tracks on the land—or sometimes in the sky—that traced the route of the creators. Many of these lines emerged from the rainbow serpent we discussed in chapter 2, who even now sings her own song, the one describing her original journey across the land as she formed rivers, mountains, and sacred sites.[1]

To the Irish the invisible journey ways were fairy paths, while the Incans called their sacred pathways spirit lines, or *ceques*. Often connected by stones and springs, spirit lines usually terminated at the tops of holy mountains.

In ancient Germany these invisible paths—often marked by sacred sites, structures, and natural objects—were called holy lines. In Japan, China, India, and Tibet they were referred to as dragon lines in deference to kundalini, which can appear in the form of a dragon as well as a serpent. In fact, tracking the dragon lines is an honorable art among the Chinese, who use the term *lung-mei* or "dragon currents" to describe these invisible natural forces. Even today the ancient Chinese art of feng shui is employed to determine the flow of the dragon currents, which are set in place by the sun, moon, and important planets. A feng shui practitioner assesses the dragon currents and places rocks and other objects in the correct positions to help a person or structure align with these invisible lines of energy.

In North and South America the original inhabitants knew about these invisible lines. Fragments of ancient tracks can still be found in Mexico, New Mexico, and elsewhere. In contemporary America these lines are often called energy lines or electromagnetic lines, with their intersections termed vortexes. By far, however, the most typical label assigned these invisible lines, which are associated with visible power sites and earth markers (such as stones and springs), is ley lines.

"Ley line" was a term first conceived in 1929 by Alfred Watkins, an English businessman and amateur archeologist (although he also used the

labels “old straight tracks” or “archaic tracks”). His term is now the most popular one used to describe the invisible straight and geometric alignments that run across the landscape, often linked with places of geographical interest such as sacred sites, ancient monuments, megaliths, and even water markers such as moats. These “ley markers,” as they are called, often show the location of a ley line, which, according to Watkins, must start or finish on a hill.

More recent scholars have distinguished one type of ley line from another. There are ley lines based on astronomy, meaning they mirror constellations in the sky; funerary usage, or tracks to help spirits move to the heavens after death; magnetic lines, which are beneficial for growing plants and, many believe, for psychic activity; and geometric alignments, the obvious appearance of geometric forms between ley markers. The use of ley lines in the creation of pre-pagan and pagan sites seems to have started between 7000 and 6000 BCE, and many post-pagan sites, such as churches and castles, were simply rebuilt over these powerful areas.[2] Ley lines are not the only grids originating in the earth. There are several other types of earth-based lines, usually considered electromagnetic in nature. The appearance of various electromagnetic vibrations and frequencies, however, can be related to a number of factors, such as earth metals, stones, waters, and more.

There are several other types of grid lines, which can affect us positively or negatively. They might enhance our immune system, physical health, and mental and emotional states, and nourish our subtle energy anatomy. Conversely, negative earth energies can cause what is called geopathic stress. Correlated disturbances in our physical and energetic systems have been shown to cause everything from insomnia to cancer, to lock us into destructive emotional imprints, and to attach a geographical area or a person to negative spirits or entities.[3] There are many naturally occurring earth grids that can affect us. Typically we know they exist because our body reacts. We feel tingly, chilled, or hot. Some people find these grid lines with divination or dowsing rods. Made of wood or metal, these rods are held by a talented intuitive and usually point downward when a site is detected. Sometimes

these areas can also be detected with equipment that shows increased magnetic, electrical, or electromagnetic activity.

Here are brief descriptions of a few of these grids:

The Hartmann Grid: A network of naturally occurring charged lines that can send energy upward to six hundred feet. Harmful radiation is intensified at the intersections of these lines.

The Benker Cubical System: Composed of energy tracks that are polarized alternately and can negatively affect our immune system.

The Curry Grid: A mystical force field composed of crisscrossing lines. The intersections produce radiation that can be beneficial or harmful.

Black Lines: Natural earth energies that don't run in lines but are localized and quite dangerous. Sometimes caused by subterranean running water and geological fault lines, their negative effects increase during solar and lightning storms, and can even carry upward through steel girders and buildings.[4]

How Earth Grids Are Formed

How are the earth's grids actually created? One theory is based on electrical science. The story begins on the sun, which discharges large numbers of charged particles from its upper atmosphere. These particles, consisting of high-energy electrons and protons, form the solar wind.

The solar wind blows onto the earth at speeds of up to 900 kilometers per second. Meanwhile, the earth is emanating its own energy field. Consisting mainly of molten iron, the earth's core generates a strong north-south magnetic field. The flux lines of this field revolve continually around its polar axis every twenty-four hours or so. When the solar wind interacts with this field, the result is the creation of an enormous generator. Power literally emanates from the planet's core, creating currents that flow and wind around the earth.

These currents are often called earth energy or telluric currents. They are electrical currents that are extremely low frequency and can, in turn, produce

magnetic or electromagnetic waves.[5] These waves cycle in one direction for twelve hours and then in the opposite direction for another twelve hours each day. The vectors of these currents are relatively consistent, although they can vary in regions because of topography.[6] The exact time of the shifts in direction also depends on the time of year in different regions and factors such as ionospheric conditions, latitude, local geology, or human sources of electrical interference.[7] In general, however, the time changes are the result of the relationship between the earth and the sun. Over millions of years, however, these cycles have settled into patterns or grooves that appear like grids of low frequency longitudinal electrical waves, which generate magnetic fields.

The different types of grids, such as the Hartmann and Curry grids or the Benker Cubical System, are composed of what can be called polarized synchronized standing waves. If an energy conductor, such as a huge standing stone, is placed within the grid, the stone begins to resonate with the grid's energy. Move the stone and you change the energy reflected through and from it. When a conductor is within two intersecting gridlines, it will produce an even more powerful emanation.[8]

How Earth Chakras Are Formed

Many experts believe that earth-based chakras are formed at intersections of grid lines, just as human chakras are created at the intersections of the nadis or meridians. Does every intersection form a chakra? No. But there are hundreds or even thousands of minor earth chakras and at least seven major ones. Many experts assert that there are twelve major chakras and 144 minor chakras located across the globe in seas and oceans, atop mountains and hills, in caves and grottos, and even in sites of ancient civilizations or sacred sites.

No matter what number there are, the vortexes or spiraling energies found at the earth's energetic intersections might be electrical, magnetic, or electromagnetic and could be called mini chakras. They appear frequently in areas such as Sedona, Arizona, which have high concentrations of iron oxide and other metals and minerals such as magnetite. Areas of this type are

especially susceptible to the formation of chakras and vortexes because these elements are crystalline in organization. As the outer core of the earth churns and produces the magnetic north and south poles, called dipole magnetism, a portion of the earth's energy reaches the crystalline areas and creates a non-dipole effect, or vortex, which spirals.[9]

While some experts theorize that the earth, in conjunction with stellar forces, forms its own matrixes that result in chakras and vortexes, others assert that the earth was first formed from a universal matrix, one that imbedded a subtle energetic anatomy within and around the earth. It would be natural to build sacred sites at chakra or vortex points, as these points are the strongest gateways for tapping into a front-loaded universal consciousness and its heavenly powers.

There is yet another theory about the earth's chakras: that the chakras themselves might form at least some of the planet's grid lines. In this line of thinking, earth chakras are considered doorways between the physical and spiritual worlds. Earth energy—or earth kundalini—travels from one earth chakra to another. As the kundalini, sometimes called the plumed serpent or rainbow serpent, links chakra point to chakra point, energetic pathways are secondarily formed. These energy lines are so intense that people often gravitate toward them, building sacred sites upon them. This attraction is frequently unconscious, but the truth is that our subtle anatomy, therefore all aspects of us, resonates with positive earth energies and buildings constructed in alignment with them. In fact, structures built on negative natural lines or designed incoherently ("against the grain") will drain us of subtle energies, therefore creating undesirable effects such as exhaustion, irritability, and even illness. Poorly constructed buildings or the like suck these earth energies parasitically, diverting the earth's natural energy flow. Fortunately, such energy distortions can be cleared and healed using techniques covered in Part 3.[10]

So far, we've examined several of the main theories about how earth chakras are formed—but there is another idea. It is one that is not always taken seriously by mainstream science, even though thousands of scholars,

archeologists, and lay researchers, as well as dozens of cultures, believe there is ample evidence to support its existence.

Do Earth Chakras Signify That We Came From or Have Been Visited By the Stars?

We know that holy sites through the ages have been chosen because the energy there felt special and unique. Desiring to reach the heavens, our ancestors had only to tap into the surrounding ley lines, infused ley markers, chakras, or vortexes to bring themselves closer to the stars.

Yet there might be another reason our ancestors chose the sites they did—and made what they made there. It could be that these sites were less a means to touch the gods than to communicate with them.

Huge numbers of people believe that humans originally came from other planets or at least were visited by ancient astronauts delivering wisdom, technology, instruction, and maybe even the knowledge encoded in sacred scripture. This theory provides one explanation for the appearance of sacred sites, the truths in sacred scriptures, and perhaps our knowledge of subtle energy anatomy.

Dozens of cultures testify to an extraplanetary origin. Let's return for a moment to the Americas to discover these cultural storylines:

- The Hopis called the Pleiades the *Chuhukon*, meaning "those who cling together," and consider themselves descendants of Pleiadians.
- The Navajos labeled the Pleiades the *Delyahey,* or "sparkling suns," the home of their Black God.

- The Cree first came to earth from the stars in spirit form and then transformed into flesh and blood.
- The Tsalgi point to the Pleiades for their ultimate origin as well.
- The Dakota speak of the *Tiyami*, their ancestral home, as being located in the Pleiades.
- The Aphibones tribe in the Brazilian Amazon say the stars were the home of their ancestors.
- The Shipibo-Conibo people, who live in the Amazon rainforest in Peru and Brazil, create designs on cloth that show the way back to their homeland in the stars.
- Pre-Incan societies believed people from the stars taught them how to use fire, grow crops, and invent mathematics and astronomy.
- The Mayans, Incans, and Cherokee all believe they came from galactic origins.
- Some Native American tribes believe that all North American tribes came from the Pleiades and were given the task of keeping the earth safe.

In fact, there has even been a meeting of a group of the Star Nations, members of which include tribes from the Sioux nations, Eastern tribes such as the Iroquois and Oneida, the Mayans and Yaqui, the Maori from New Zealand, and even the Saami from the Arctic Circle. This group of six believes that they are descended from the stars and must attempt to save the earth from destruction. A few have suggested that the world's prophets, including Jesus Christ, were star people who came to remind us of the truth of our souls.[11]

Harley Swiftdeer Reagan of the Deer Tribe Metis Medicine Society believes the cosmic origins of the human family include celestial ones: the constellations of Orion, Andromeda, Ursa

Major, Ursa Minor, Cassiopeia, Scorpius, and the Pleiades, among others.[12] According to Serge King, a well-known Hawaiian healer, author, and shaman, the *huna,* or ancient healing philosophies—which include knowledge of chakra-like energies and mana, the equivalent of prana—were brought to the earth by people from the Pleiades. King also believes that most of the information in the Vedas, the Old Testament, and Greek writings shares the same origins.[13]

Further testifying to their Pleiadean origins, the Cherokee assert that the first star people formed Atlantis, an ancient land, on five islands in the Atlantic Ocean. These first beings were known as the "sacred seven."[14] According to the Sioux, the first human came to earth from the stars in a meteor, and from his power and medicine grew the rest of the Sioux people. They also suggest that every being must come to earth the same way as did the first human being, through the *Winyan To*, a feminine being named Blue Woman in the center of the Milky Way. All souls travel her spirit road in a spiral motion, the spiral being a common theme among all cultures.

The Americas aren't alone in carrying star stories. For twenty years anthropologist Marcel Griaule studied the Dogon, a primitive group in Mali, West Africa. His talks with a blind wise man named Ogotemmêli supposedly resulted in the revelation of secret tribal knowledge, including knowledge of aspects of Sirius B, a star that is not visible to the naked eye. Said Ogotemmêli, this knowledge came from the *Nommo*, fishlike spirits who came from the heavens amid fire and thunder, delivering knowledge of the universe and life principles. (There are many detractors to the validity of Griaule's claims, as later researchers could not replicate his fieldwork.)[15]

Many other cultures hold that their spiritual and scientific knowledge was taught to them by beings from the stars, now

called “ancient astronauts.” Many proponents of this theory point to the existence of the Giza pyramids in Egypt, Machu Picchu in Peru, the Moai statues of Easter Island, Stonehenge in England, and Baalbek in Lebanon. The argument is that these simple civilizations could not have created these massive structures on their own.[16] Yet others point to passages in the Old Testament that might indicate an alien presence in early times.

For example, the Old Testament mentions the Nephilim, “sons of God” who mated with the “daughters of earth” and produced the “giants in the earth” (Genesis 6:1–4). Many believe the Nephilim were aliens, not angels. They speak also of Ezekiel, a prophet who was taken to the heavens in a cloud that featured a center of glowing metal, four living creatures, and rimmed wheels (Ezekiel 1:1–28)—a description compared to spaceships. And in chapters 6 through 20 of the book of Enoch, an ancient Jewish work, Enoch describes the angels (called Watchers) mating with earth women and teaching them charms, enchantments, metallurgy, and how to grow plants. According to this book, the offspring are the Nephilim. Enoch writes that God decided to rid the world of the Nephilim and the humans who acquired the Watchers’ knowledge, although Enoch petitioned on their behalf, at which time God told him to remind the Watchers that they were formerly spiritual and had become physical. Enoch was also taken to a place with seven stars, a place between heaven and earth.[17] In this story we find many of the basic themes we’ve been addressing in this book, including the separation of the spiritual and physical bodies and the emphasis on the number seven.

In Hindu scripture the gods and their avatars are often described as traveling from place to place in flying vehicles. This activity is described in many texts, including the Ramayana, dating to the fourth or fifth century BCE. There are also descriptions in the

Mahabharata of lightning diving down from the sky and weapons made of rays, as well as a chariot that can rise up into a mountain of clouds. And the ancient Chaldean work the Sifrala contains over a hundred pages of technical details on the building of a flying machine.

Spaceships seem to have been a worldwide phenomenon in ancient cultures. For example, Chinese archaeologists discovered ancient Sanskrit documents in Lhasa, Tibet, and found that they contained directions for building interstellar spaceships using a system known as *laghima*, a power of ego within man's physiological makeup. According to Hindu yogis, this is equivalent to the power that enables people to levitate.[18] The Chinese also speak of a race of extraterrestrials called the Dropas, who lived about twelve thousand years ago and left behind disks that might argue as to the existence of this race.[19] Across the world in Mesoamerica, the Popol Vuh, an ancient Mayan writing, speaks of men who came from the stars, knew everything, and examined the four corners of the sky and the surface of the earth.[20]

Yet other artifacts suggest the presence of extraterrestrials. As an example, petroglyphs found around the world feature images suggestive of visitors. I have personally seen a stone statue in a museum in Merida, Mexico, that looks exactly like common descriptions of a space being, and I have listened to the stories of the Shipibo Indians in Peru, who spoke of having first come from the stars. These people weave a cloth that features geometrical designs showing how the jungle's rivers mirror the constellations, and—as they told me—the "way home." The Shipibos believe that seven children, born of the moon and the sun, climbed down to earth on a blazing staircase. These wise children discovered fire, invented arrows, and taught men much wisdom, becoming the forefathers of the Amazonian tribes. [21, 22]

The Hopis also spoke of *kachinas*, gods with mighty powers who came to earth to help the natives, interacting with the people of that time. Like the Hindus, the Hopis believe we are in the fourth age of man. They also believe that the Blue Kachina, a being similar to the Messiah, will return and herald in an age of peace, or the fifth age of man.[23]

The belief in several creations or ages is a widespread phenomenon that raises the question of whether some of these ages began on earth or "offsite." The Cheyenne say we are in our fifth world. The Aztec and other Nahua people believe we occupy the fifth sun or age. Hesiod spoke of five ages and Ovid of four.[24]

Whether or not we came from the stars or were visited by celestial beings, it has been suggested that dolmens, stone circles, pyramids, and other energetic focal points on earth were means of communicating with higher beings. Earth chakras, because of their superpower charges, would be ideal places to build old-fashioned "communication stations," whirling units that enable the sending and receiving of messages.

What Do Earth Chakras Look Like?

Like bodily chakras, earth chakras have a defined appearance. They are either spherical or saucerlike in shape, have depth and width, and expand three-dimensionally in a spiraling motion, which can be clockwise or counterclockwise. Their patterns of transmissions often correspond to the shapes of the chakras.

An earth chakra also has a widespread reach, its radius extending for hundreds of miles. Says expert Robert Coon, whose earth chakra system is featured in this chapter, a chakra operating at its optimum level radiates a distance of 777 miles.[25]

Coon's philosophy is similar to that of many earth chakra experts: that there is an earth chakra on every continent except Antarctica (although Coon

believes that Antarctica is the home of other subtle organs). As well, there is at least one major sacred site at the center of every earth chakra. Coon is a proponent of the belief that the energy emanating from one earth chakra is passed to the next one. The pathway between these major chakras, or even minor ones, often generates geometric forms and moves in cyclical waves. Linking these chakras are gateways that serve as doorways between physical and spiritual energies.[26]

Not every earth chakra has been plotted on a map—chakras and other vortexes appear in every land and sea. Your own house or dwelling might have been built on a vortex or minor chakra, one that is either supportive or harmful, or at least affiliated with one or more earth lines. It's important to recognize the earth's energetics in your own life since they may affect you, and it is equally important to know how to address any disparate energies so you can improve your health and well-being, and do the same for the earth.

The Effects of Earth Chakras

As I have already suggested in relation to earth lines in general, some of the intersections along the earth's energetic field assert positive impact, and others, negative. The Himalayan and Peruvian areas are considered positive, while areas like the Bermuda Triangle and the Devil's Sea or Dragon's Triangle (east of Japan) are called "vile vortexes."

There are at least ten "vile vortexes" or chakra-like energy sites that have caused ill effects to journeyers or people living near these sites. For instance, planes and ships have disappeared in a green fog in the Bermuda Triangle, as well as in the Devil's Sea. There are also many positive healing vortexes, which include the main earth chakra areas as well as Findhorn, Scotland; Lake Baikal in Siberia; and Kiev, Ukraine.[27]

Some of the negative chakras might be harmful because they are blocked or holding dysfunctional energy—just like their human counterparts. If it is poisoned by toxic energy of any sort, including that collected from human beings, an earth chakra will warp in size and shape and distort the life around it.

The good news is that earth chakras and vortexes can be cleared. Whether you are physically near the chakra or not, you can help rebalance an earth chakra by using intention, prayer, and crystals and other instruments.

Most of us don't live near a major chakra such as the Grand Canyon and others outlined in the next section. Yet because we are nonlocal beings, a concept we first explored in chapter 1, we can still be affected by distant chakras. We might have been previously associated with a certain locale in a different lifetime and retained an energetic attachment. We might know people who live near a certain chakra or we might have a strong affiliation because of an interest in a particular place. These links can work against us or for us, making it all the more important to learn some of the techniques I presented in Part 3.

It's equally important to use these techniques in your own home, yard, or other nearby areas. Chances are that most of us live on or near ley lines, if not a "mini chakra" or vortex. Whatever has been experienced on a piece of land or a corresponding ley marker—which might be a house, fountain, or statue—can affect our energetics and therefore our health, mood, relationships, and more. One of the reasons we are so vulnerable is that we are linked to the earth through several smaller chakras, the earth star chakra, and the hara line, concepts explored in chapter 32.[28] Added to our list of important tasks is knowing how to clear and rebuild our own chakras, the topic of several exercises in Part 3.

EXERCISE: **Is There a Vortex in Your Area?**

Many of us have vortexes in our home, on our land, or nearby but haven't stopped to label them as such. These mini chakras can affect us positively or negatively. Before we can use the exercises in Part 3 to access beneficial vortex energy or clear harmful energy, we must first discover them.

Think about any areas in your environment that typically "grab you"—that shift your emotions, thoughts, physical energy, or even your spiritual well-being—on a consistent basis. If the vortex is destructive,

you will recall a downward shift in mood, negative thinking, loss of vitality, or a sense of dark presences or energies zapping your strength. If the area is uplifting, you will remember an increase in optimism, joy, or peacefulness, increased vim and vigor, a sense of unity or appreciation, or the presence of loving spiritual guidance.

You can also walk around your home, your land, or an area near you to sense these same energies. It is easiest to spot a vortex at dusk or dawn, as this is the time when the veil between the worlds becomes weaker and you are best able to sense the energetic or spiritual. You will sense a distinct difference in energy, whether it is moving downward or upward.

You can also use a pendulum, the tool I described in chapter 12. The weighted object will flow with spiraling electromagnetic energy and make it easier to detect a vortex. Taking your pendulum, first stand close by a suspected vortex but not in it. Hold your pendulum level with the potential vortex. If the vortex is in the ground, hold it above the ground. If it is up in a tree, raise the pendulum as high over your head as possible. Now test the region near the vortex to see if you pick up any movement.

Next, move near the vortex. Spin and grasp the pendulum near or in the area you are testing. Does it start moving in broader or wider circles as compared to the first spot? Does it swing clockwise or counterclockwise? If there is a significant shift in the movement of the pendulum, you have probably discovered a vortex.

Earth Chakra Systems

As I mentioned, there are dozens of contemporary systems that feature chakras in the earth, or vortexes that function on the planet as do chakras in the human body. This section discusses three systems so you can get a sense of earth-based chakra systems overall and how different types are assessed.

Erickson's Contemporary Earth System

Well-known spiritual blogger and healer Lisa Erickson has researched a variety of available earth chakra systems to arrive at a synthesis, also using her intuition to zero in on the most likely spots. She highlights the chakras that appear on most maps most frequently and represent each of the major continents, excluding Antarctica, as follows:

chakra one: grand canyon (north america)

The Grand Canyon is located in northern Arizona and southern Utah and incorporates areas with vortexes and the ancient lands of the Hopi mesas.

The Hopis in particular are a spiritual and ancient tribe, as their chakra system and beliefs, featured in chapter 29, indicate. Could it be that they drew upon the chakra energies of their area for guidance, power, and wisdom? On the other side of the world is the seventh chakra point, Mount Kailash, a Himalayan mountain sacred to cultures including the Tibetans. Because they share many traits, it's been suggested that the people of these two regions are descended from the same ancestors.

chakra two: machu picchu (south america)

Peru's Machu Picchu is often called the "lost city of the Incas." Situated on a mountain ridge overlooking the Urubamba Valley, it represents the emotive and sensual beauty of the second chakra.

chakra three: uluru (australia)

Uluru, or Ayers Rock, is a large red rock formation in central Australia. Sacred to the Aborigines of this area, it is linked with self-definition and personal power.

chakra four: glastonbury tor (europe)

Tor means "conical hill," and that is exactly what this chakra location looks like: a gigantic cone. Located in England, the Tor area has been linked to the Celts, Druids, and Arthurian legends. Many believe it is the location of the mystical isle of Avalon, discussed in the upcoming "Legends Linked to Earth Chakras" section. The story of the Holy Grail, a significant aspect of the Arthurian legends, is also described in that section.

chakra five: giza (africa)

Egypt appears in nearly every earth chakra mapping, almost always representing the dreaming, expression, language, science, and religion associated with the throat chakra. Giza, replete with pyramids, is one of the most revered areas in this part of the world.

chakra six: mount fuji (asia)

This Japanese mountain is famous among Zen masters and is often associated with the clarity and insight of the third eye.

chakra seven: mount kailash (asia)

Located in Tibet, this Himalayan peak is sacred among followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Bonism. It is associated with the meditative and mystical experiences aligned with the crown chakra.[29]

Coon's Earth Chakra System

Modern spiritual author Robert Coon, whose theories combine sacred geometry, cross-cultural spirituality, astrology, and more, testifies that the earth is a living being that is constantly evolving. It therefore employs earth-based chakras to maintain its own health and transmit information. All chakras pass energy to one another, forming their own pathways for the rainbow and plumed serpents, or kundalini. Each plays a role in supporting the planet and the life upon it.

Following is a brief summary of the main seven earth chakras:

chakra one: mount shasta (north america)

This Northern California mountain has been the subject of many UFO sightings; it introduces biological life energy into the world.

chakra two: lake titicaca (south america)

At the border of Peru and Bolivia is Lake Titicaca, a representative of the second chakra, advancing new species and enabling advances within existing species.

chakra three: uluru and kata tjuta (australia)

Twin sites in northern Australia, these two regions conjoin to form the solar plexus chakra. Globally, this chakra ensures the health and vigor of all living species and holds the energy of Dreamtime, featured in the "Legends Linked to Earth Chakras" section, below.

chakra four: glastonbury and shaftesbury (europe)

These two sites, located in England, merge two grand ideas. Glastonbury signifies the legend of the Holy Grail, which offers immortality, and Shaftesbury represents willpower through the symbol of the Spear of Purpose or Destiny.

chakra five: the great pyramid, mount sinai, and the mount of olives (middle east)

These sites within Egypt and the Middle East compose a sphere of fifth chakra energies intermingling with four vortexes that regulate fire, air, water, and earth. It is through this planetary chakra that the earth speaks, begging us to ask the question, "Are we listening?"

chakra six: aeon activation center (mobile)

Every aeon (or eon), this center moves one-twelfth of the way around the world, always to the west, as determined by the revolution of the earth's axis. It is labeled according to the zodiac age. (We are now leaving the Age of Pisces and entering the Age of Aquarius.)

chakra seven: mount kailash (asia)

This sacred mountain in the Himalayas reflects the earth's purpose or will. It is related to the legend about the Lost Chord of Creation (described below).[30]

Legends Linked to Earth Chakras

A variety of legends are linked to earth chakras—lore that casts a mysterious light on the chakras and the sacred sites associated with many of them. One such legend is that of the Lost Chord of Creation.

The Lost Chord is considered the first melody of creation, the primary sound from which the universe emerged. We have lost at least one of the original tones in this harmony of the spheres and must find it to restore ourselves to unity and love.[31]

According to certain metaphysical concepts, there were originally three families in creation—the Elohim, Seraphim, and Braharama—whose sounds constituted the music of the spheres. The Lost Chord is a mistranslation of their original teachings, which means there are three "lost notes."[32] If these notes can be found and sounded together, we will return to our eternal nature and all things mortal will vanish.[33] This idea of sound originating the universe is comparable to the tantric belief that the *om* originated the universe,[34] the biblical belief that creation emerged from "the Word," and the general philosophy that chakras reflect sacred sounds. (Exercises that include sounds are found in chapter 13.)

Yet another concept relating to earth chakras is that of Dreamtime. According to Australian Aboriginal culture, Dreamtime is the era of creation from which appeared all of life, including the worlds of human, animal, bird, and fish. Also from the Dreamtime come the laws of existence, as well as supernatural beings born "from Eternity," the totem ancestors who made all living species as well as the elements. They have since sunk into the earth and fallen asleep. Some of their spirits have turned into rocks or trees, and these constitute sacred sites—only recognizable as such, however, by the initiated.[35] Located at these holy sites might be chakras or vortexes.

The British Isles legend of King Arthur, along with the associated stories of the Holy Grail, the Spear of Purpose, and the Island of Avalon, is one of the most enduring in the Western world. Though Arthur was, in reality, most likely a military

leader in the fifth century CE, he has been fictionalized to such an extent that he is the center of what is now a worldwide fairy tale.

Arthur was the son of King Uther of Pendragon and, through the advice of the magician Merlin, he became the king of England. Many magical objects have been associated with his rule, including the Holy Grail and the Spear of Purpose. After his death Arthur was put into a boat and floated downriver to Avalon. It is said he rests there still, until he is ready to ride again.[36]

A sacred chalice, the Holy Grail has been linked to Christ's last supper. It represents everything from the personal quest to finding the kingdom within to a cup of immortality. It has been a feature in Theosophical, Neopagan, and Rosicrucian writings and in works by authors including Rudolf Steiner and Carl Jung, and it is often representative of the fourth earth chakra—which in many systems is Glastonbury Tor.

The Spear of Purpose is the spear that pierced the side of Christ. It became one of the greatest symbols of Christendom, and whoever possessed it was said to hold the destiny of the world in his hands, for good or evil.[37] Both the spear and the grail have been linked to Avalon, a mystical and pagan site of magic and mystery, as well as to Glastonbury Tor, which is said to be Avalon in the physical realm, given that Avalon has now disappeared into another dimension. Basically the Tor is seen as a gateway between worlds, between the paradise represented by Avalon of the past and the current time period.

The Glastonbury area has also been connected to the zodiac, with the area's ley lines linking the various signs and chakras associated with the different zodiac symbols. This "Glastonbury zodiac" was noted by scholars including Dr. John Dee, physician to Queen Elizabeth I in the late sixteenth century, and Kathryn Maltwood, who, with the aid of maps and aerial photographs,

figured out the pattern as a replica of the stellar signs of the zodiac on the ground.[38]

It is also said that Joseph of Arimathea brought the grail to Glastonbury in the first century, as well as the spear, which he used as a staff. Once planted at Glastonbury, it became a flowering thorn.[39]

The Keys of Enoch: Chakras and the Egyptian Mysteries

The Book of Knowledge: The Keys of Enoch is a unique work synthesizing Eastern and Western religions and science, spirituality, and metaphysics.[40] Its author, J. J. Hurtak, a double PhD, claims to have psychically received the information he presents in his book through revelation from Enoch, the principal architect of the Great Pyramid. In the book Hurtak links the Great Pyramid with the Belt of Orion, showcasing the chakras as relating to the Egypt sites. These chakras are considered tools for linking us with a higher structure of universal consciousness in order to help us evolve.

Hurtak explains that the chakras link us to higher wisdom, and he calls them by two labels: "seals," according to Western tradition (such as in the book of Revelation), and chakras, alluding to Eastern tradition. He recommends transforming the chakras through intonation and visualization, and by getting beyond our locked-in memories. These activities enable us to link to a cosmic "Tree of Life," or higher order, finally bonding us with the "One," or the "I Am." Living flames of color and sound can be found within various "Keys," or principles, that unlock the Divine Mind inside.

As we find in tantric traditions, Hurtak also says we must experience this means of enlightenment on all levels—subatomic, molecular, genetic, mathematical, musical, paraphysical, and superluminal—to open to the Shekinah, or the feminine aspects of God.[41] Shekinah is a Hebrew word for the feminine Hebrew blessing of God and is comparable to Shakti in the tantric traditions.

Yet another proponent of this ancient Egyptian system, Sylvia Sharama Shanti, points out that Hurtak's system is part of the Melchizedek awakening, referring to a king noted in the Bible and a key figure in various Western mystery schools. According to one of the many Orders of Melchizedek, humans came from the stars; Osiris was an early visitor from the Orion constellation. Through the Egyptian pyramids and constructions, which were built according to sacred geometry, he and other cosmic guides formulated a "way back" to the stars—at least, a way to reactivate our luminescent abilities and lineage. The pyramidal shape is critical in this process, for it is aligned to Orion and the "Lords of the Light" who can help us evolve.[42]

Following is a description of Hurtak's chakra system as relating to the Nile, which he depicts as comparable to a spinal column connecting eight pyramidal temple areas with eight human chakras. (Hurtak's eighth human chakra is located about twelve inches above the crown; the others are located in the same places as in the Hindu seven-chakra system.) Thus we are provided an electrochemical blueprint in stone that mirrors our own electrochemistry through the ancient cities linked to the chakras.

- First chakra—Abu Dis—the human blueprint of primal energy
- Second chakra—Abu Simbel—ensures fertility
- Third chakra—Thebes—processes functions of life and death
- Fourth chakra—Karnak—links us to heaven's heartbeat
- Fifth chakra—Abydos—opens our true voice
- Sixth chakra—Memphis—awakens our third eye vision
- Seventh chakra—the Great Pyramid at Giza and the Sphinx—enables evolution
- Eight chakra—the Academy of On, an ancient site—links us to our oversoul and accesses a ninth chakra field that admits living light [43]

Crop Circles and Other Metaphysical Earth Art: Images from the Stars or…?

Crop circles are patterns that appear in farm fields overnight. Imagine your surprise if, when the sun set, the grain you tended was a lush, smooth field waving in the wind, and when you visited your fields the next morning, a geometrical form had appeared in your crops! Over the last few decades this phenomena, whose shapes are often compared to chakras, has raised several questions as to its origin and meaning.

Crop circles are not simply circular images; rather, they are composed of many shapes. The most basic is of a single circle with internal designs, although the circles also come in doubles, quadruples, or more. Typically bent into a swirling pattern, the grain may spin clockwise or counterclockwise or be mixed. The circles range from a few inches to several hundred feet across, and what were first discovered as fairly simple diagrams now often appear as elaborate masterpieces, at least since 1990 onward. Often reflecting ancient motifs, several apply mathematical proportions, typically based on Euclidean geometry.

Most crop circles are found in the south of England, but others have been discovered in North America, Australia, Japan, India, and elsewhere. The big question is who—or what—is making these circles? Theories include UFOs and aliens, winds, aircraft, earth energy (such as electromagnetic radiation), and humans. One interesting note is that in August 2001, two witnesses in Holland saw tubes of light descend into a string bean field, leaving behind a new crop formation.[44]

One particular crop circle was called the Bythorn Mandala. Formed in Cambridgeshire, England, and appearing in 1993, it resembled images of the third Hindu chakra; see page 798 for a photo and chakra comparison. Subsequent comparisons between crop circles and chakras suggest that many crop circles relate to the chakras, as well as the chakras' kissing cousins, yantras and swastikas. Even the esoteric symbol of the kali yuga has also appeared.[45]

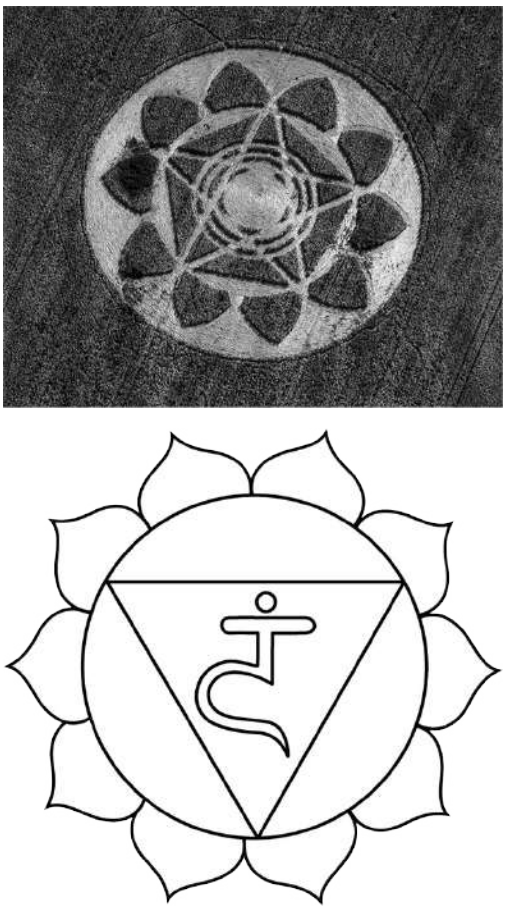

ILLUSTRATION 98—CROP CIRCLES AND CHAKRAS: Many crop circles have been compared to the chakras, including the Bythorn Mandala (bottom), originating in 1993, which is similar to the Hindu third chakra (top). ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT, PHOTO © LUCY PRINGLE

Metaphysical earth art isn't new. Centuries-old geoglyphs called the Nazca lines in Peru form figures that can only be seen in their entirety from the sky, as they are fifty to twelve hundred feet in length (as large as the Empire State Building). It is believed that a long-forgotten people called the Nazca formed them between 200 BCE and 500 CE by brushing away the dark top layer of the barren desert, leaving the lighter soil underneath. The windless climate has preserved these hundreds of figures, mainly animal shapes and geometric designs, into the present day.

It has been suggested that these figures are communiqués with the gods, although two archeologists, Clive Ruggles and Timothy Ingold, discovered

by walking around several of the figures that they might have served as paths, such as are found in a labyrinth. Many ancient cultures, such as the Hopi and the Egyptians, used labyrinths for spiritual purposes, such as passageways for gods or spirits.[46] It is noteworthy, however, that the geoglyphs occurred where shamanic tribes were present. This fact leads to the idea that these tribes, which used hallucinogens to promote "spirit flight" or out-of-body journeying, might have steered the creation of these images on the ground, given their "birds-eye view" of the area.[47]

EXERCISE: **Creating Your Own Songline in Your Environment**

Have you ever visited a particularly uplifting place in nature, one that so benefited you that you wished you could take it home with you? This peaceful and rejuvenating spot might have been a recognized chakra site, ley line, or natural or spiritual site, or it might have been a place that simply felt vital to you. It's possible to re-create this space, this "songline," in your own environment.

Start by recalling the special site. Re-create the feelings you experienced there, concentrating on your emotional response. Now sense the positive reactions in your body. Smell any related aromas; feel the soil, snow, or sand beneath your toes; hear the sounds of nature all around you; completely give yourself to the sensual memories of the locale. Now remember the sense of spiritual awareness that invited oneness, unity, and love. Put your experience into words. Keep the description short and succinct; like a poem, the words you choose need only mean something to you.

Next, decide what current environment you'd like to transform into your personal songline or earth chakra area. This can be a tranquil setting in your backyard, a park, an indoor altar space, or even a walk you take daily. In this setting sing the words that evoke your sacred site. Let the melody choose itself, and let the experience of holiness you once felt in that special place renew within you in this new space. Ask that the energy you are invoking become established in this new

location. You might even want to place a new focal point, such as a rock, shell, or plant. After a few days of engaging in this process, your new songline, or spiritual chakra site, will provide you the same feelings as did the original hallowed ground.[48]

Of Earth and Sky: Rudolf Steiner's Astrogeographia System

Just as the earth nurtures our bodies, so do the heavens. In one particular system, called Astrogeographia, the earth and heavens join to nurture our body-based chakras.

Astrogeographia is the study of how the stars are projected onto the earth. The analogy to the human being is this: if we have a birth chart, perhaps the earth does too.

Robert Powell and David Bowden, authors of the article "Earth Chakras"[49] as well as the book *Astrogeographia: Correspondences Between the Stars and Earthly Locations*,[50] have determined that Rudolf Steiner believed there was such an association; moreover, humans' chakras also related to specific planets. By dint of association, Powell and Bowden link Steiner's system, which connects specific chakras with the classical seven planets, to Robert Coon's earth-chakra system that we discussed earlier in this chapter.

Combining these systems, we arrive at this proposal, which I have summarized in a chart that connects a human chakra with an earth chakra as well as a planet:

Chakra	Continent	Site	Planet
First	North America	Mount Shasta	Moon
Second	South America	Island of the Sun, Lake Titicaca	Venus
Third	Australia	Uluru and Kata Tjuta	Mercury
Fourth	Europe	Glastonbury and Shaftesbury	Sun
Fifth	Asia/Africa	Great Pyramid, Mount Sinai, Mount of Olives	Mars
Sixth	Europe	Aeon Activation Center (mobile)	Jupiter

Steiner's depictions of the heavenly bodies are similar to the descriptions of others. Following is a short rendering of Steiner's.

Moon: The moon reflects back everything that radiates upon it, though it also contains information about our hidden selves.

Venus: Venus influences us through her ability to lovingly transform the events of earthly life into dream images.

Mercury: Increases our capacity for intellect and reason, coordinating knowledge and mental activity.

Sun: Imbues us with the warmth we need to succeed at our destiny.

Mars: Encourages us to make statements about the mysteries of the universe.

Jupiter: Sends us creative thoughts from the universe.

Saturn: Receives impulses from the universe but allows none of them to stream back. It does, however, store all of earth's history—and maybe our own—in its cosmic memory.

EXERCISE: **Steiner's Planetary Energy in Your Body**

You can bolster your own chakras using Steiner's ideas about earth chakras and the planetary energies by engaging in this guided meditation.

Settle into a comfortable position and focus on your first chakra. Now imagine yourself on Mount Shasta, a volcanic mountain in Northern California in which the spiritual dimensions blend. Pull the energy of the moon into your first chakra. Allow something you've hidden from yourself, and that you now need to accept, to arise into your conscious awareness.

Centering on your second chakra, pretend you are enjoying the Island of the Sun in Lake Titicaca. On this holy island in Bolivia, an Incan sacred site, concentrate on one of your most important goals and feel

what happens when Venus sends you the energy to transform it into reality.

While breathing into your third chakra, allow yourself to be transported to Australia, where you find the immense red-rock monolith of Uluru and the rock domes to the west, called Kata Tjuta. Let these spiritual centers, which are of great importance to the Aborigines, support your connection to Mercury, clearing up mental confusion and inspiring you with an important idea.

Breathe into your fourth chakra as you discover you've landed in Glastonbury, one of two sites in England that can connect your heart to historical legends and magic. Ask of the sun above, "What is my destiny?" Fill yourself with the response.

Then focus on your fifth chakra as you are transported to the Great Pyramid in Egypt, one of the sites linking that chakra with Mars. Let Mars shower you with insights about the mysteries of the universe, and bask in the resulting connectivity.

The activation center for your sixth chakra is mobile. Allow Jupiter to help you choose the appropriate place. Jupiter will enhance your creativity: what site is it selecting—or creating—for you? Breathe in the colorful energies of this site and feel your creative abilities expand.

Then, finally, focus on your seventh chakra and find yourself on Mount Kailash, a massive black rock in Tibet and one of the most venerated spiritual sites. Feel Saturn's beams streaming down and awakening you to your history—your true history, that of your spirit and your soul.

Take a few deep breaths and know that you can return to any of these sites any time you wish.

Animal Chakras: The Energy of Our Earth Friends

Our closest friends, the animals, walk this world as we do. They are grounded upon the earth, they live under the skies, and they have chakras, as do all living beings.

The chakras in animals function in similar ways to ours, interfacing with auras and nadis/meridians. I admire the work of Margrit Coates, author, teacher, and animal healer and communicator, and her understanding of an animal's chakras.

Coates explains that our companion animals often require healing, as their energetic fields can pick up on our illnesses and concerns. Animals are particularly sensitive to their caregivers' moods and needs. She recommends techniques including hands-on healing, mental imagery, and the sensing of physical sensations or emotions to decipher an animal's issues or to send energy. It can be especially helpful to perform evaluation and healing through an animal's chakras, as they have even bigger and brighter chakras in relation to their body size than we do.[52]

Coates believes that in addition to the major seven chakras, animals have another major chakra that is unique to them. Called the brachial or key chakra, it is found on either side of the body in the shoulder area. Linked to the other chakras, it relates to animal-human interaction and is the ideal place to begin animal healing work.

A crystal shop in England called Patinkas features a thorough explanation of all animal chakras and makes its system available online, along with full-color posters you can order.[53] In total, the featured system shows eight major, twenty-one minor, and six "bud" chakras for animals. I have already described the unique eighth or brachial chakra. The bud chakras are found on each foot (pad, paw, hoof, or claw), and one is also found on the skin at the base opening of each ear; they serve as subtle energy receptors.[54] These are especially receptive to subtle energy vibrations such as changes in the weather. The bud chakras in the feet can sense vibrations in the ground.

The twenty-one minor chakras are sensory centers found on places like the nose, tail, and ears. While smaller than the major centers, they are vital and assist in the functionality of the major chakras. The nose chakra, for instance, is vital as it allows animals to receive information through their olfactory glands. This is an imperative way to sense the environment. For instance, dogs have 125,000–300,000 scent glands busily at work.

Each of the major chakras can be described with a location, color, purpose, and signs of imbalance. For example, the eighth animal chakra is considered black and is found between the shoulders. It enables bonding. Imbalances appear as the reluctance to bond.

The fifth chakra is found at the throat and is blue. An animal with fifth chakra problems will be uncommunicative and won't listen. The green heart chakra, at the breast, relates to the herd mentality. A challenged fifth chakra will create sadness or possessiveness in an animal. In general, the chakras in animals and people are quite similar in terms of their tasks and colors. You can see an example of a dog chakra system, which is comparable to other animal systems, in Illustration 99.

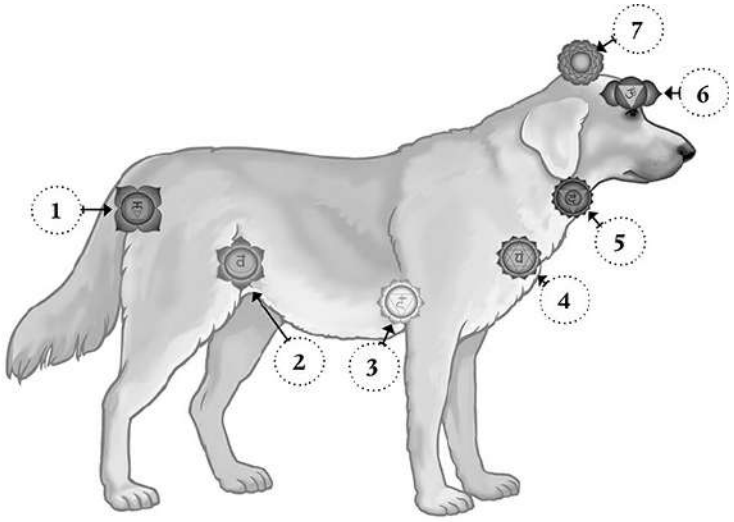

ILLUSTRATION 99—ANIMAL CHAKRAS: A dog's chakras attune them to humans and the environment. The chakras of a horse and a cat have the same location points. See the insert for a color version of this image. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

In chapter 33 we affirmed our connection to nature. We are part of the earth and skies, and they are part of us. What an amazing truth, that so much of what comprises the human self also composes the natural world. Because of this we can live with our feet on ground and our head in the skies.

It's now time to look to the future, the focus of our next chapter.

[contents]

New and Unusual Chakras and Chakra Systems

YOU CAN BE the moon and still be jealous
of the stars.

GARY ALLAN

The chakras have no reason to be jealous of the stars. No matter what system or culture they are imbedded in, they play a key role in helping us harness the stars and plant them firmly in our everyday lives. And while you have encountered many systems in this book that have stood the test of time, maturing in development and practice over centuries and even millennia, there are always newcomers: emerging forms and new applications of these sparkling energy bodies. This chapter showcases a representative sampling of the fresh and original in chakra medicine.

It is impossible to cover every emerging trend; there are too many. I can, however, whet your appetite for evolving chakra medicine ideas that might lift us all over the next horizon. First, I'll feature a few of the "new" chakras, those not previously described, and then I'll move into the territory of energy bodies and kundalini. I will include some of my own work on my twelve-chakra system and chakra models related to hand, feet, and facial reflexology. I'll sum up the chapter with an emerging scientific model of the energetic system.

This brief chapter is more than a simple last-minute sweep of the chakra medicine path. It is a promise that there will always be more chakra knowledge to come because as long as humans grow and evolve, so will our energetic systems and the knowledge base we continue to cultivate.

Unusual Chakras: A Sign of Times to Come?

A common belief in chakra circles is that there are emergent chakras. Some of these are considered brand-new, as if just "invented"; others are incipient, only now being activated.

One of the reasons given for the evolution of new energy bodies is that we may be shifting from third-dimensional living into the fourth and fifth dimensions. Metaphysically, the third dimension is physical, the fourth is truth or the astral plane, and the fifth is a place of light.[1] This shift is necessary to fulfill the hope of humanity, a hope imbedded in the Hindu theory of four yugas (covered in chapter 5). It is now time to come into our own in terms of peace and higher consciousness.

It is curious that the ancients believed we have de-evolved over time. Yet they also asserted that we can ascend to the heavens again if we so choose. Personally, I would say that heaven is already here and that our own actions can render the world even more heavenly, transforming darkness into light. At the very least, we have seen that chakras are comparable to the stars in the sky, which appear fixed but are actually shifting themselves: continually (if imperceptibly to our eyes) moving and changing. With this in mind, let's begin our exploration of our new energetic stars on earth.

New Chakras Broadcast in the Energetic Media

The Internet has done us all a service, as have standard media forms such as books and recordings, in opening our eyes to the world of chakras. Following is an overview of the new chakras that are now showing up in popular circles, even Facebook and Pinterest. I have included commentary about some of these chakras, linking them with others we have discussed in previously known chakra systems.

the earth star

Our link to the earth, this chakra was discussed in chapter 32. The earth star serves as our connection to the planet.

the emergent ajña chakras

Some practitioners perceive a split of the brow or ajña chakra and the formation of two separate gland-based chakras: the pituitary and pineal gland

chakras. These separate energy centers now co-create the intuitive abilities once ascribed to ajña and exist in addition to sahasrara. These chakras are now better able to access, store, and disseminate higher light frequencies and enable mystical experiences. I call these twinned chakras the emergent ajña chakras because together, they form the once-singular ajña chakra.

the etheric mirror

This chakra is part of my own body of work. It is integrated like a silver film inside the tenth auric field, right next to the first auric field, which is also a part of the body's etheric field. The mirror-like side closest to the body, shows all the issues that have ever affected the body, positively or negatively. The silvery sheen facing outward shows what we are revealing to the world. In the middle layer of the etheric mirror lies a film that reflects our most correct, most ideal programming. I often encourage people to energetically open this center film to heal internal issues as well as their relationship with the world. For an exercise related to this energy body, see "The Etheric Mirror: Seeing the Healing" exercise later in this chapter.

the galactic female

About six inches above the crown and to the right, this center controls the left side of the body and contains the raw feminine material forming our personality. This chakra could also be the "light body" chakra appearing on the collective mindscreen, which is seen as silver-white and is in charge of creative talents. I relate this chakra to the thirteenth point in my thirty-two-chakra system or the yin point, which you will find reviewed in "The Expanded Twelve-Chakra System" section in this chapter.

the galactic gateway or transpersonal point

Located twelve inches above the crown, this center is our connection to universal energy and a higher light grid. Another esoteric system perceives a thirteenth chakra at this location that stimulates a desire for harmony. This center is comparable to the transpersonal or solar chakras reviewed in many chapters in this book.

the galactic male

Six inches above the crown and to the left, this center manages the right side of the body and contains our masculine traits. It is comparable to the fourteenth point or yang center in "The Expanded Twelve-Chakra System" in this chapter.

the gray body

The gray body links us with beings from various dimensions, and it emerged from my own work. It can be cleared to release negative attachments and cords, especially those related to extraterrestrial problems.

the halo chakra

Associated with a newly forming diaphragm center, this soul star or halo chakra is associated with the lower dantian and stores negative emotions. As it activates, it dissolves fear and doubt. It is frequently considered yellow sapphire or gold in color and exhibits Christlike qualities. I compare it to the ninth chakra in my thirty-two-chakra system, which is found above the head but locks into the body through the diaphragm. I picture it as gold and relate it to harmonizing.

the pain body

Introduced by author and philosopher Eckhart Tolle, the pain body is the accumulation of old emotional pain and is carried in our energy field. He perceives it as a semi-autonomous psychic entity full of the negative emotions that we have not yet faced, accepted, and released. The resulting residue is stored in our bodily cells. There is also a collective pain body that contains the pain of all human beings throughout history. When this body is active it seeks more suffering to feed on and leads to an addiction or unhappiness. I have included a short exercise for working with the pain body in the "Disembodying the Pain Body" exercise later in this chapter.

the silver cord

The silver cord connects the soul to the body while you are alive. It is mentioned in many traditions and described in "The Silver Cord: Your Link to Life" section in this chapter.

the silver body

The silver body attaches to the Akashic Records and other eighth chakra records, including the Shadow Records and the Book of Life, as well as the silver cord. These are all discussed in this chapter, and all are part of my own subtle energy work. This body, which is located around the thymus, can be intuitively read to determine what soul issues are affecting us.

the star seed of destiny

The star seed of destiny is born from the star body and moves to the seventh chakra. There it bursts open to transform the intuitive abilities into higher-order spiritual gifts, more completely activating the pineal gland and, I believe, the caudate nucleus described in chapter 10. This body also comes from my own work.

the star body

This body contains the codes of your spiritual purpose and destiny, as well as the star seed of destiny. It lies in the tenth chakra in my own system. (In some of my other books I called it the "tar body" because it is dark and tarry, but because it also contains the germ of our celestial self, it made sense to alter the name.) The goal is to release the star seed of destiny from it so we can evolve spiritually.

the technology chakra

An adaptive vehicle for creating a universal net of information exchange, similar to the Internet, the technology chakra also enables us to adapt to the technological world and gain access to the information within it. This body is also original to my own work.

the thymus chakra

Many practitioners believe the thymus is a newly emerging chakra, while some systems locate the fourth chakra in the thymus instead of the heart. Governing the immune system, it can help us adapt to the world and clear old traumas. It is also said to help us adjust to a "thoughtform body," an energy body that helps us shift to the fifth dimension. It also creates instant karma, meaning we get exactly what we think about. It is often described as blue-

green. In my thirty-two-chakra system I include a thymus-based chakra related to the eighth chakra above the head, one that enables our shamanic activity. The eighth chakra is black or silver.

the victim chakra

I believe that human bodies have developed a "victim chakra," a sort of energetic pouch that attaches to the emotional chakras as well as to our soul. Unfortunately, it has become as mature a chakra as has our first chakra. It contains all our lifetime experiences of being victimized, and it passes forward from lifetime to lifetime. For some people, these painful experiences and beliefs cause further victimization patterns, and some use the data this chakra contains in order to victimize others. This chakra is also part of my own body of work.

the zeal chakra

Also called the Well of Dreams, the ascension chakra, and the Mouth of God, this chakra is located at the base of the skull. It governs interdimensional communication and astral travel, influences the limbic system, and is ultimately leading to a more completely integrated energy system. When activated it should lead to multidimensional telepathic communication and enable a shift from the third to the fourth and fifth dimensions. It can be seen as magenta. My sense is that the zeal chakra relates to brahmarandhra, a Hindu chakra at the back of the skull that is commonly considered a secondary chakra related to sahasrara, or a second outlet of that chakra.[2]

EXERCISE: **Disembodying the Pain Body**

Is there anything we can do to alleviate our pain body? I have created an exercise based on Eckhart Tolle's wisdom in this matter, but first I'd like to share what he has to say.

Overall, Tolle suggests we eliminate the pain body by cutting its link to our thoughts. Negative thoughts feed the pain body, furthering suffering and compulsive thinking. The main feeling that fuels negative thinking—and therefore the pain body—is fear, especially fear about

the future. By centering in the present moment, we disengage from our worries, and this reduces the pain body.[3] In addition, I believe the pain body also increases when we are depressed or mired in unmet needs.

From a chakra point of view, depressed feelings result from being stuck in the past. When this occurs the related chakras spin too slowly. Anxious feelings reveal that you are worried about the future and that a part of your consciousness is literally in the future, attempting to control an outcome. In this case the related chakras spin too fast.

Next time you feel pain, whether physical or emotional, stop and breathe. Ask your inner guidance to reveal the main chakra in distress. You might sense or intuitively perceive this chakra. Now get a sense of whether it is spinning too slowly or quickly. Breathe deeply into the center of this chakra, which holds your higher spiritual awareness, and allow that internal light to spread into the outer regions of the chakra, evening out its speed and intensity. If there is a message you need in order to heal an issue underlying your affiliation to the past or a fear about the future, request it.

Notice through this process that you are simultaneously releasing the perceived need to feel pain and access the pain body. Pain is a statement; it holds a message. When you receive the message, you no longer need the pain.

Remain linked with this chakra until it is flowing smoothly, then bring your awareness back into the everyday world.

EXERCISE: **The Etheric Mirror: Seeing the Healing**

The etheric mirror, as I describe it in this chapter, lies within the tenth auric field, which is right outside your skin and formed in the shape of your body. The innermost of its three layers reveals the causes of your current state of internal health and well-being, the middle layer holds your optimum possibilities, and the outermost layer reflects what is occurring in your relationship to the world. All three layers are reflective, like a mirror.

To create a change using the etheric mirror, focus on an issue that creates disharmony. You can intuitively peer into the inner layer to gain a sense of the internal nature of the problem, and—just as you would look into a mirror—intuitively look into the outer layer to see any external reasons for this challenge. Then intuitively center on the middle layer, the reflective film that contains the answers to your problem and the energy that will be required for rebalancing. Ask your higher guidance to activate the needed energy and mechanisms for change. Get a sense, too, of whether there may be any actions you need to take to bolster the process.

You can use this process for all kinds of issues, from recovering from trauma to working with financial stressors.

The Expanded Twelve-Chakra System

My twelve-chakra system, which I introduced in chapter 32, features five chakras in addition to the classical seven Indian chakras. The twelfth chakra is actually a collection of thirty-two additional secondary chakras that are located in the body or the auric field. These secondary chakras serve the endocrine function associated with chakra twelve and basically integrate all aspects of the self.

In addition to these twelve chakras are twenty more spiritual points that operate like chakras. These spiritual points do not fluctuate when we move from lifetime to lifetime; rather, they represent parts of ourselves that are always held within the Divine. Linked to our lower chakra bodies through our soul, when they are activated they allow us to pour higher energy into the lower chakras for purposes of enlightenment.

Here I list all the chakras and points, along with their key words, to show the entire system in one place.

Chakra	Location	Concern
First chakra	Hips	Security
Second chakra	Abdomen	Feelings

Third chakra	Solar plexus	Mentality
Fourth chakra	Heart	Love
Fifth chakra	Throat	Communication
Sixth chakra	Forehead	Vision
Seventh chakra	Crown	Spirituality
Eighth chakra	Thymus and one inch above the head	Mysticism
Ninth chakra	Diaphragm and an arm's length above the head	Harmony
Tenth chakra	A foot below the feet	Nature
Eleventh chakra	In the auric field and around hands and feet	Commanding
Twelfth chakra	Around entire aura and 32 other points in the body	Personal to us

The thirty-two points in the twelfth chakra are as follows: legs, buttocks, coccyx, sacral vertebrae, lumbar vertebrae, thoracic vertebrae, cervical vertebrae, cranium, silver cord to the soul, bubbling springs in the feet, ankles, knees, thighs, hip bones, navel and sexual organs, appendix, kidneys and adrenals, large and small intestines, pancreas, liver, gallbladder, spleen, stomach, diaphragm and lungs, arms, bubbling springs in the palms, wrists, elbows, clavicle, throat, upper brain, and the center of the earth.[4] These can be worked with in the same ways as the chakras, such as by using the practices in Part 3. In fact, if I'm working with a client and feel like their chakras are too blocked for me to gain headway, I specifically work with the points. The easiest way is to use intention and focus on the heart or a point right above the head, asking to energetically link with a specific point in order to receive information about a presenting problem for it, as well as to work with it.

The higher twenty points have no specific locations. Following are their names, which contain the germ of their purpose:

Spiritual Energy Points

13. Yin
14. Yang
15. Balance of Polarities
16. Balance of Similarities
17. Harmony
18. Free Will and Freedom
19. Kundalini
20. Mastery
21. Abundance
22. Clarity
23. Knowledge of Good and Bad
24. Creation
25. Manifestation
26. Highest Purpose
27. Peace
28. Wisdom
29. Enjoyment
30. Forgiveness
31. Faith
32. Grace [5]

The Outer Bounds of the Twelve Chakras: The Energy Egg

Knowledge of the energy egg, the outer edge of the auric field, has been a vital part of my healing practice. In my twelve-chakra system this egg lies outside of the twelfth auric field; if you work with a seven-chakra system, you could imagine it outside of the seventh auric field.

This egg, long known to shamans around the world, is similar to the cellular membrane around the cell. This permeable membrane determines what we

take into our field and what we keep out. We can work with these layers using the same types of techniques found in Part 3.

As you can imagine, this function is extraordinarily powerful—but it goes one better. There are three layers in this field, each regulating a distinct set of auric layers as well as a set of life concerns. The layers divide as follows:

Innermost Layer

This layer affects our physical self and everyday reality. It regulates the tenth auric field (connection to the natural world and our ancestry), the first auric field (physicality), the second auric field (emotions), and the third auric field (mentality).

Middle Layer

This layer runs our thoughtforms and consciousness patterns. It determines what will disappear from and appear in our lives based on our goals, dreams, and intentions. The middle layer works through the fourth auric field (love and heart's desires), the fifth auric field (communication and higher guidance), and the sixth auric field (vision and the future).

Outer Layer

This layer connects us to the cosmos. Through this layer we can access heavenly support and energy, whether or not it has appeared on this planet before. It operates through the seventh auric field (spirituality and spirit connections), the eighth auric field (various dimensions and planes of existence), the ninth auric field (others' souls), and the eleventh auric field (command center for natural and supernatural forces).

Many of the energetic techniques found in this book can be put into practice to work with these three layers. Simply concentrate on the layer you want to work with as if it were any other energetic body.

Chakra Seals

I frequently work with chakra seals, sets of protective lenses that connect with the chakras and can empower your chakra work. Besides offering

protection, they also serve as focus points for higher spiritual forces, which can be directed into or out of the body through them.

Seals are often referenced in esoteric literature in association with power and blessings. For instance, upon baptizing Jesus with the Holy Spirit, God speaks and informs the crowd that he has "set his seal" upon his son (John 6:27). In general, a seal indicates truth as well as ownership.[6]

Further research and work in my practice has helped me perceive that each front side and back side chakra has a seal, which looks like a contact lens. Typically, when we are born our seals are "unset." This means that they are convex, or pointed inward. When we "set them," they flip and become concave.

When they are convex, seals can hold negative energies in our chakras, causing recurring patterns. There are also spiritual energetic forces in the world that may be either constructive or destructive, and a convex seal can hold the wrong forces in place.

For instance, we might have inherited a destructive force from our parents through our first chakra. This can cause loss of physical energy. But a constructive force can also be stuck in the wrong place. We don't want to feed a tumor with a constructive force or it will keep growing.

A set seal can operate as a consciously controlled receptacle for these spiritual energies. Using intention or will, we can decide which forces to attract, release, or hold in our chakras. We can now supercharge our chakra medicine work.

Setting your seals can be done with intention during a meditative state. You can ask for guidance to set your seals in whatever way is helpful or appropriate and to show you how to best use them as well.

The Back Sides of the Chakras

It's as important to know about the back sides of the chakras as it is the front sides. The back sides work with our unconscious, subconscious, and soul issues, opening us to spiritual powers, while the front sides focus on what

affects our everyday reality. They can all be accessed using the same techniques you use for the front sides, as described in Part 3.

Here is how I describe what is possible when we work through the back sides of the chakras in my twelve-chakra system.

The Back Sides of the Seven In-Body Chakras

Chakra One: The back side of the first chakra contains all the beliefs and experiences we have ever held regarding our right to manifest, create, and flourish on the physical plane.

Chakra Two: This back side holds our feelings about ourselves in relation to the holistic universe. Energy enters to help us experience our feelings completely and decide what to do with them.

Chakra Three: This back side is an intellectual template that helps us decide, based upon our belief systems, what energies we need to let in to make effective life decisions.

Chakra Four: This back side is a portal to the wonderful playground of our soul. Divine energy enters through the back side to stimulate our heart's desires so they can be realized.

Chakra Five: Through the back side of the fifth chakra we receive celestial or channeled guidance from other beings, other dimensions, and other aspects of ourselves. We then pass it to our front side for expression.

Chakra Six: Considered the sight chakra, the back side of the sixth chakra receives all the paths that could take us forward. The meeting point between the front and back of the sixth chakra—the pituitary gland—evaluates these paths according to our highest purpose.

Chakra Seven: The back side of the seventh chakra is simultaneously located nowhere and everywhere. Here we open to and realize the divine spark of consciousness, the back side serving as an access point through which we can connect with all beings of the divine Source, whether they are physically alive or not.

The Back Sides of the Five Out-of-Body Chakras

Though these chakras don't technically have a back side, they are able to perform back side functions, which include the following:

Chakra Eight: This chakra accesses bodies of knowledge storing the past, our experiences through time and space, the history of creation, and the history of our own creation. We can channel all powers and forces available through any time-space continuum through this back side.

Chakra Nine: This back side illuminates the spiritual aspect of our soul heritage, story, and genes. It also contains the history of the material universe and its effects on and through us.

Chakra Ten: This back side stores the history of this earth and of our own ancestry. It accesses all elemental, natural, and supernatural forces and streams of consciousness.

Chakra Eleven: This back side is open to all supernatural and natural forces from any source.

Chakra Twelve: This back side is open to energies, beings, and support from all spiritual realms, known and unknown.[7]

Amazing Energetic Bodies

We've explored dozens, if not hundreds, of non-chakra (or beyond chakra) energy bodies in this book. There are a few I must also mention to round out your chakra medicine knowledge kit.

The Silver Cord: Your Link to Life

> Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed.—Ecclesiastes 12:6
>
> Students should train themselves to distinguish between the sutratma and the antahkarana, between the life thread and the thread of consciousness.—Alice Bailey, *Ponder on This* [8]

> One's emotions must never break the bonds of life, one's hands must never labour to loosen the silver cord, one's ears must never strain to catch the sound of Michael's trumpet.—William Butler Yeats, *Ideas of Good and Evil* [9]

The silver cord, also called the life thread and the astral cord, was mentioned in the Bible, as quoted above, to describe the connecting link between our soul and our body, and life and death. Metaphysically described as the link between our physical body and our etheric or astral body (depending on the expert who describes it), it is also called the *sutratma,* or direct stream of life, that carries our soul from lifetime to lifetime.

It has been visually depicted as an elastic string, a coil of light, a silvery light, a current of mysterious influence, a silver chain, a smoky string, and a shaft of sunlight. One well-known expert on the subject, Alfred Ballabene of Austria, states that its bodily location can be almost anywhere but is most often on the front of the body, the breast, the back of the head, or the abdomen.

This cord forms when the spirit self exits the body, such as when we're sleeping, are in shock (at which point the soul often pops out of the body), or are daydreaming. At first it looks stringy and gluelike, most likely a collection of small cords, and then it strengthens into a single cord. When the more ethereal self leaves at death, this cord is said to either come with it or dissolve altogether.[10]

Many metaphysicians intuitively perceive the silver cord as a wispy filament about an inch in diameter, serving as a sort of umbilical cord between our subtle and physical selves.[11] While I believe that the silver cord can connect the physical body to any of the subtle bodies, including the etheric, astral, and causal, it does this through the soul, attaching to the soul's etheric body or covering. In this way, just before death, the cord can transfer the experiences, emotions, and memories of the lifetime into the soul's etheric body so these return to the "other side" with the soul. I also believe that the silver cord attaches to the soul before conception, as a sort of guiding

line to help the soul find the body. It is spun from the just-joining energies of the sperm and the egg. Its exact location in the body at this time is dependent on the karma of the parents and soul combined. If the parents are lackluster and negative, the silver cord might be engineered lower in the baby's body; however, if the incoming soul is extremely light and advanced, this could overcome the parents' lower frequencies and plant the silver cord higher in the body.

My own determination is that the soul doesn't usually enter an in utero body until the second trimester, although it can land earlier or during birth. It can visit throughout the pregnancy, however, popping in and out via the link to the silver cord.

At birth the silver cord starts guiding the incoming soul up through the first chakra, the first entryway of the soul, into the rest of the body, often moving it down through the feet but also upward through the spine. I have found that most silver cords eventually lock in at the fifth chakra or perhaps the shoulder blade, clavicle, or high heart area. This location is near the eighth chakra that I feature in my twelve-chakra system and is the house of the mystical soul in the body. Thus, when the soul needs to travel during life, it can most easily do so through this area. This thymus area is also similar to the placement of the Daath, or the Void, in the Jewish Kabbalah system, the center of all possibilities. Ultimately, our soul's job is to keep opening our life to transformation; thus, to drink of this well of dreams is consistent with this purpose.

At death, the soul often exits through a wound area or, if we've learned our life lessons, the crown, where we also have a consciousness thread (the antahkarana) that enables a loving, spirit-filled exit. Regarding my first point, if we die of a heart attack, our soul might depart through the heart. If we die from a concussion, our soul might take leave through the skull. The trauma of a difficult exodus could cause the soul to imprint the injury on the next child body. We could be born with a heart murmur or a traumatic brain injury caused by a difficult birth.

I believe the reason so many intuitives perceive the silver cord as linked

with the abdomen is that there are two more etheric cords connected to this region. One is the Vivaxis, described next, which serves as an umbilical cord to the earth. The other is a mother-child umbilical cord, which remains attached between a mother and child until the child is about four years old. This maternal cord enables an exchange of energy and information between mother and child and alerts the mother to her child's needs. In the case of adoption or an unwanted pregnancy this cord can be frail or nonexistent, establishing the potential for attachment disorders in the child. If a mother fails to release the child appropriately, the child might become too dependent on the mother or someone like her.

During our natural life, the silver cord, as our attachment to the soul, enables our soul to travel while we're sleeping, daydreaming, creatively visioning, or traveling out of body. We often visit various planes of existence to learn, work out psychological issues, and obtain insight or healing energy for the body or mind. We can also get lost on the lower levels of the astral plane and get tangled up with darker souls or entities. Some healers also consciously leave their bodies—perhaps to obtain healing for themselves or someone else or to visit another dimension—and knowingly remain linked through the silver cord. These voyages are often called journeying, dreamstalking, remote viewing, or astral travel.

The Vivaxis

We are blessed with an energetic sphere that develops within us when we are fetuses and then forever links us to our place of birth. Vivaxis is a term coined by Judy Jacka (and her teacher, Frances Nixon) and is described in detail in Jacka's book *The Vivaxis Connection*.[12]

Through this energetic cord, energy flows between our birthplace and ourselves throughout our lifetime, like a two-way umbilical cord of magnetic waves. When major shifts occur in the land, whether caused by natural or human alterations, we might experience similar effects in our own bodies. The Vivaxis is therefore an ideal energy body to assess for symptoms that

might include fatigue, chronic inflammation, sudden-onset autoimmune disorders, or severe environmental allergies.

In my practice, I have often found that issues ranging from minor to major often dissipate or disappear completely if we replant our Vivaxis, moving it to a site that suits us rather than challenges us. I encourage clients to first figure out where their Vivaxis is planted. While it is usually located in the birthplace, it can also be ungrounded or locked into a past-life geographic site. I then have them select one or more places that will be ideal for the Vivaxis. Some of my clients have picked their favorite place on earth, others chose an element (such as air or water), and still others have selected a heavenly site.

The Soul Records

The energetic bodies that follow are records for the soul. This means they hold information pertinent to all levels of our soul's development and growth. In my twelve-chakra system I perceive them as being housed in the eighth chakra, which is found just above the head, although it locks into the body through the thymus. My understanding of these records is partially based on my own experience but also on research.

The three major recording energy bodies are the Akashic Records, which chronicle everything ever seen and done; the Shadow Records, those things that were unseen as pertaining to the Akashic Records; and the Book of Life, which reflects the positive aspect of all events. The information that follows is essential to understanding these bodies, which I recommend you access to obtain further information when doing chakra work.

the akashic records

The Akashic Records are a metaphysical library or compendium stored in a nonphysical plane of existence, that contains all knowledge of human experience. These are records of the factual "history" of both individual lives, including our past lives, and the cosmos itself. One of the extraordinary aspects of the Akashic Records is that they contain the knowledge of everything ever done, said, or thought in what we experience as past, present,

and future. The most elegant way to access the Akashic Records is through the eighth chakra—meditatively attuning to the portal of the eighth chakra to open to receive the information you seek. The Akashic Records are often utilized to do past-life work, inner-child work, or when you are engaged in a significant decision-making process.

the shadow records

An incalculable amount of emotional, mental, and physical pain comes from our "unfinished business"—one of the primary sources of our regrets, disappointments, heartache, and even shame. This unfinished business is often the things not done, not said, not thought, and not felt. Across time and space, we could simply describe this human phenomenon as "what hasn't been and still lingers." Another way to understand the source of regrets that turn toxic is that they stem from the things we believe could have or should have happened. However, the Shadow Records hold the knowledge of all of these things for a beautiful reason. It is not to taunt, always reminding us of what wasn't; rather, it is to ensure that when we are ready, we can access what we need in order to come to completion in our hearts and minds. You can access the Shadow Records by focusing your mind's eye on the energy around the Akashic Records or eighth chakra, but also around any of the chakras. You will literally sense or see situations related to regret—your sadness about what you haven't done—and resentments, your anger and blame regarding what you believe others should have done.

the book of life

The Book of Life contains the knowledge of the gifts of the paths you have taken. Once we've gone to the Akashic Records and the Shadow Records to gather pieces of our lives, the Book of Life then provides a transformational viewpoint, allowing us to deeply know and understand what is important in any and all of these things—what happened, what didn't, what could have, what will. The Book of Life is akin to donning God's glasses. When we view our life through the lens of the Divine, we can experience the healing, transformation, and peace that come from this sacred perception. It is a

heartfelt enlightenment arising from gratitude, where we can say, “Okay, I now see the gifts of the path I have taken.”

EXERCISE: **The Book of Life: Transforming the Negative to Positive**

The Book of Life is a library linked to the eighth chakra or our shamanic self, which carries our karma. We are often plagued by regret (wishing we or another had said something different) or resentment (believing someone else caused our problems) because we can’t find the silver lining in the cloud. Join me in this short exercise that will help you uncover this silver lining and transform the negative into positive.

Imagine that your guidance has handed you a large book. The title is *The Book of Your Life*. You open it to discover a pair of eyeglasses. Picking up the glasses, you examine them, noticing their color and sensing what that color means to you. As with the chakra colors, each means something different: red is passion, orange is creativity, yellow is mentality, etc. The coloration of the eyeglasses also indicates which chakra is most blocked and will be your focus for this exercise.

As you put the glasses on your nose, you hear a voice that says, “These are the Divine’s eyeglasses.” When you wear them you are able to perceive what you’ve gained in a situation, no matter how dark the circumstances. Perceiving the wisdom and learning gained doesn’t infer that abuse or evil was ever acceptable; rather, it enables the gathering of flowers so the weeds can be left behind.

Focus on the chakra holding a sticky issue and allow the spiritual energy of the Divine’s glasses to help you perceive all aspects of the circumstances the way the Divine does. Specifically ask to perceive the positives and ask for assistance in releasing or transforming any hurts, pain, or negatives.

When you feel ready, take the glasses off and return them to the book, which disappears into the air. You can access it again anytime you want.

Emerging Systems of Kundalini

Like chakras and energy bodies, kundalini concepts have shapeshifted over time. Through my own work I have created a kundalini system that draws on ancient principles and presents three forms of kundalini.

The red or serpent kundalini is equivalent to the Kundalini Shakti forged in the first chakra. When working with clients, however, I make sure that before they activate or increase this kundalini energy, they draw elemental energy upward through their feet from the earth, drawing in the correct balance of all the elements for their unique system. I work with a ten-element system—earth, air, fire, water, stone, wood, metal, light, ether, and star—and have found that when the body is first sustained by the subtle elements, the kundalini flow takes place more easily and smoothly.

The second form is golden kundalini. This stirs the amrita, or nectar, described in the Hindu enlightenment process by falling from the heavens to enter through the seventh chakra. My own system, as do many, places two chakras above the head. The top chakra is gold, and it is this center that colors the heavenly energy. Golden kundalini enables us to access godly power and spiritual law.

The third form is radiant kundalini. This is a living divine power that inhabits the center of every chakra, cell, and aspect of our being. It is pure light and ensures intimacy with the Divine. I have found that opening the radiant, then the golden, and then finally the red kundalini ensures a stress-free kundalini experience. More information on these forms of kundalini can be found in my book *Kundalini: Divine Energy, Divine Life*.[13]

In my research I have also discovered indications of a black form of kundalini. Typically this feminine kundalini is associated with Kali, the goddess of darkness. Kali is yet another name for kundalini, who has many names in tantra as she rises through the body. The mystical aspect of kundalini could be called Kali, and she is ultimately a creative force. The bindu in the heart of her yantra is the same as that found within the Shiva yantra.[14] I have sometimes drawn on this form of kundalini when people are

dealing with deep grief or life-threatening situations. She is a jet black, fatal energy, but within her lies a light that can answer the questions we carry.

Yet others draw upon a blue light, sometimes called the blue pearl of consciousness, to guide the kundalini. It is said to be our true essence and our guidance back "home."[15] From what I have observed in my work, I would suggest that it's important to remain open to your own personal experience of kundalini. For instance, I had one client draw the serpent kundalini upward as a pink color; the red was too harsh for her. Yet another client perceived his kundalini as a green color. Colors reflect vibrational qualities, and we will perceive the vibrations that best suit us.

A Final Note: An Emerging Paradigm of Unified Energetics

In this book I have included the most leading-edge scientific discussions of subtle energy structures I could find. As we round out this part, I will briefly return to the underlying science in order to pull together a very simple explanation of the energy of the three main energetic structures—meridians, chakras, and auric fields—from a bodily point of view.

I have personally found that explanations such as this one are quite useful "on the street." Many believe that meridians, chakras, and fields are so much "woo woo" or weirdness. During dinner with a new friend I brought up the phrase "energy centers," and he laughed. After I briefly explained the physical definitions of energy centers and channels, he said, "Oh, that makes sense."

From the work of Charles Shang, a researcher in this topic whom I featured earlier in this book, a simple explanation of the existence of meridians and chakras is contained in a hypothesis called the morphogenetic singularity theory. Morphogenesis references the first development of an embryo or the "beginning of shape"; a layperson's way to label this theory is that it's about our first cellular development after conception.

What we know is that acupuncture points are characterized by a high electrical conductivity and that both meridians and their points have a high

density of gap junctions. As you'll recall from chapter 21, gap junctions are special cells that allow molecules and ions to pass freely between the cells. Bioelectrical fields help control growth and the formation of our cells and work especially well in areas with this electrical conductivity and density of gap functions. In fact, electrical fields control growth and change. The meridians and the points on them are especially responsive to the messages of these fields, not only while we are in utero but during the entirety of our life. The points themselves are areas that can send these electrical messages in different directions, making sure that messages are disseminated through the body.

Within this paradigm, what are chakras? They are "organizing centers of growth" made of germ cells.

Germ cells are specialized cells involved in reproduction. They are found in the reproductive organs, but germ cell systems are also found in exactly the seven areas of the body where we find the chakras: the sacrococcygeal area, gonads, retroperitoneum, thymus, thyroid, suprasellar region, and pineal gland. These more or less underdifferentiated cells are responsive to bioelectrical fields, as are those involved with the major twelve meridians and their acupuncture points. I conclude that the chakras maintain the body's regulatory function through high levels of intercellular communication. Areas with a high density of gap junctions can communicate with other parts of the body to maintain proper forms and functions. An anomaly can be detected and corrected by manipulating these centers.

Now if someone asks me exactly what the energetic structures are, I say that they are the bodily cells that respond to the needs generated by our bodily fields. They determined the growth and development of our embryonic bodies and continue to respond to our injuries and emotions.

Perhaps the energetic structures are more grounded in physical reality than we've ever thought.[16]

CONCLUSION

Your "Great Perhaps"

I go to seek
a Great Perhaps.

François Rabelais

How might your life change if you were to completely embrace the concepts, practices, and truths of chakra medicine? Which of many "perhaps-es" might occur if you had more complete access to your chakras than you do today?

Do you have a desire for true love or deepened friendship? A dream to discover a new star or an innovative tool for plumbing? Do your "perhaps-es" lead you to better health, a thicker pocketbook, or maybe writing some fantastic poetry? Remember: since chakras affect everything, they can help you create almost anything. By learning and using the many exercises I have included in this book, you can put to use all the knowledge you have gained: you can live your dream, not just dream it.

Our own dreamtime journey began with section I, which introduced you to the fundamentals of chakra medicine and kundalini, the chakras' all-important "sidekick." We deepened our chakra education with a thorough rendering of the seven basic Hindu chakras, the backbone of our chakra knowledge, before presenting dozens of chakra medicine practices that you can use at home or professionally.

Our chakra understandings broadened exponentially in section II when we first plunged into history, losing ourselves in the enormous cauldron of East Indian chakra knowledge. We acquired chakra insights from dozens of other

cultures in subsequent chapters, learning about everything from American understandings to Tibetan mountaintop wisdom. One approach after another followed our voluminous examination of the science of all things subtle—and obvious—in regard to chakras. After reading the science section of this book, you've earned energetic bragging rights, if nothing else.

As should happen with all books about a work still in progress—a statement that applies to chakras as well as humanity—we finished our odyssey with an examination of natural, new, and unusual chakras. What is a quest if it doesn't continue? If we've learned anything, it is that across time chakras and related ideas have helped define humanity, just as humanity has defined chakras and other energetic concepts. In our seeking of a "Great Perhaps," we can become greater than we ever thought we could be.

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Lastly and with enormous gratitude, thank you to the readers of this book. That's you! People everywhere look to the stars to learn about their potential, but those of us interested in chakras know that the stars also exist within us. We understand that the chakras, as well as other subtle energy matters, are constellations of wonder. Each initiates the seeker to ancient and new worlds. Essentially, I wrote this book for you.

[contents]

GLOSSARY

Abrahamic Religions: The three religions—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism—that trace their origin to the patriarch Abraham.

Action Organs: In the Hindu tradition these are the five organs of action that enable physical existence: the hand, the foot, speech, evacuation, and generation. They are composed of parts of the five elements.

Acupoints: Points on the body at which chi, or life energy, rises to the skin's surface.

Acupuncture: The insertion of thin needles through the skin for the purpose of balancing meridians, or energy channels.

Adi Plane: One of the metaphysical planes of reality relating to the first part of reality. In most systems it is the highest plane of existence.

Adrenals: Endocrine glands atop the kidneys.

Agamas: A collection of Sanskrit scriptures focusing on temple construction, worship, meditation, and certain types of yoga.

Agni: Hindu deity of fire.

Ahamkara: The sense of individuality or ego.

Ajña Chakra: Sixth or third eye Hindu chakra.

Akasha Plane: A metaphysical plane of infinite space.

Akashi: Empty space that becomes air, liquids, solids, and other material substances; spiritual substance.

Akashic Records: A nonphysical energetic body that stores our memories, existence in potential concurrent realities, and possible futures.

Akshara: In Sanskrit, the "immutable," as in the sole being, or God. Also the single syllable of creation, the *om*.

Alchemy: Transformation of base metals to gold or the human condition into divinity.

Allah: The monotheistic god of Islam.

Alta Major Center: An energy center associated with the carotid gland on a line perpendicular to one that could be drawn through the eyes.

Ama-kala: One of four aspects of the manifestation of Kundalini Shakti within a triangle shape in the sahasrara; the immutable source of an abundant nectar arising from the union of Shiva and Shakti.

Amesha spentas: Group of divine entities in Zoroastrianism. Can also double as chakra-type energy bodies.

Amrita: The nectar of immortality released into the body after enlightenment, which is reached through the rising of the kundalini and the merging of Shakti and Shiva.

Anahata Chakra: The fourth or heart Hindu chakra.

Anandakanda Chakra: *see* Hrit Chakra

Ancient Aliens: Extraterrestrial beings who visited the earth in the past.

Antahkarana Chakra: A healing symbol frequently believed to have originated in Tibet.

Antahkarana: The thread of consciousness resulting from union of life and substance.

Anthroposophy: A philosophy founded by Rudolf Steiner that promotes inner development to realize the spiritual world.

Antimatter: Material composed of antiparticles. When matter and antimatter come in contact, they annihilate each other.

Antiparticles: Particles that have the same mass as those in physical existence and the opposite charge.

Anulom Vilom: Alternative nostril breathing, a pranayama (breathing) exercise.

Anupadaka Plane: Part of the greater metaphysical planes and the first of non-material being. Here everything is a part of everything else.

Apana Vayu: The downward current of energy (prana). Starts at the navel and moves through the legs and feet. Nourishes the digestive, reproductive, and elimination systems.

Applied Kinesiology: An alternative medicine process involving the testing of muscles for strength or weakness in order to analyze problems and strategize antidotes.

Archetypes: An original pattern or model upon which other things are copied; a Jungian idea that there are symbols representing universal ideas in individual psyches.

Aryan Invasion: Migration of Indo-Aryans into northern India and Anatolia.

Aryans: The people who spoke archaic Indo-European language; they settled in ancient Iran and the northern Indian subcontinent.

As Above, So Below: A Hermetic principle that states what exists in the heavens is the same on earth, and vice versa.

Asanas: Body postures.

Astral Body: A subtle body mediating between the intelligent soul and the mental body. Linked to desires, emotions, imaginations, and psychic abilities.

Astral Plane: Metaphysical level often linked to astral (soul) travel.

Astral Travel: Visitation by the soul to spiritual realms and dimensions.

Astrogeographia: Modern form of ancient star wisdom using mathematics to figure out the way the earth and heavens relate to humans.

Astrology: The study of the significance of the movements and positions of celestial objects on humans and the natural world.

Astronomy: The study of the stars and other celestial objects.

Asuras: Demons.

Atharva Veda: One of four main Vedic books; it includes hymns, spells, and charms.

Atlantis: An earlier civilization thought to pre-exist the Great Flood and considered to be highly developed energetically and technologically.

Atma: Brahma or the one god.

Atman: The individual soul.

Atmic Plane: A metaphysical plane above the buddhic plane on which there exists no individuality.

Attributes: Traits of the chakras.

Attunements: Reiki word for the process of balancing energy.

Aum: *see* Om

Auric Field: Subtle field comprised of expanding layers of energy moving outward from the body.

Autonomic Nervous System: Responsible for unconscious bodily functions.

Avestans: Ancient scripture of Zoroastrianism.

Ayurveda: Traditional Hindu medicine.

Bach Flower Essences: Remedies developed by Edward Bach that are made of dilutions of flower material.

Bandhas: Body locks or movements in Hatha yoga.

Beliefs: Thoughts that help create reality and, with feelings, can create emotions.

Bhagavad Gita: Ancient Indian text.

Bhuttas (or Panchabhutas): Five elements of nature in Hinduism; *see* Elements.

Bija: Seed of sound found in the chakras.

Bindu Visarga: *see* Visarga

Bindu: Sanskrit word meaning "point" or "dot"; represents the unmanifested.

Bioenergetics: Study of the transformation of energy in living beings.

Biofield: The human biofield is an energetic matrix surrounding the body.

Biophoton: A photon or aspect of light that is non-thermal (non-heat-based) and emanates from the biological system.

Bioscalar Wave: A scalar wave, which is created when two common electromagnetic waves come together from two opposite but converging vectors, found inside or in relation to the body.

Black Hat Tradition: One of four main schools of Tibetan Buddhist lineage.

Blocks: Issues or perceptions that prevent the correct flow of energy and create our challenges.

Blood-Brain Barrier: A filtering mechanism of capillaries that can block the passage of certain substances between the circulating blood and parts of the central nervous system, including the brain.

Body Zones: Areas of the body that represent different energies or reflect specific purposes.

Brahma Granthi: Blocks the flow of energy from the muladhara (first chakra) upward.

Brahma Nadi: The energy channel at the very center of the main Hindu energy channel, the sushumna.

Brahman: The "One God" in Hinduism.

Brain Hemispheres: Two cerebral hemispheres or sections of the brain separated by a groove.

Breaths, Types: There are ten vital airs discussed in this book: apana, dhanajaya, devadatta, krkara, kurma, naga, prana, samana, udana, and vyana; *see* each air for its own glossary entry.

Breaths: Vital airs (vayus), part of prana, or the one life force; *see* Prana Vayus; Breaths, Types.

Bud Chakras: Chakras on animals and other living beings such as birds that are found on each foot and the openings of the ears.

Buddha Families: Five qualities of energy displayed as a mandala (circle) of different Buddha figures.

Buddha: Born as Siddhartha Gautama in Nepal around 2,500 years ago, Buddha is the human who became enlightened; it is also the title for a person who has awakened.

Buddhi: Higher mind.

Buddhic Body: Metaphysical plane representing a high level of intuition and consciousness.

Buddhic Plane: A metaphysical plane just above the upper mental plane.

Buddhism: A religion focused on the Buddha or process of awakening.

Cauda Equina: A bundle of spinal nerves and spinal nerve roots originating in the conus medullaris of the spinal cord; *see* Conus Medullaris.

Caudate Nucleus: Upper part of two gray nuclei of the corpus striatum in the brain's cerebrum.

Causal Body: Subtle energy body often regarded as the highest one, which veils the atman, or the soul; depository for consciousness.

Causal Chakra: A transpersonal chakra said to bring in light.

Causal Energy: Energy said to regulate or direct subtle and physical energies.

Causal Plane: One of the metaphysical planes of existence beyond the higher mental body.

Celestial Wishing Tree: *see* Hrit Chakra

Cellular Receptors: A protein molecule within the plasma membrane of a cell that receives signals from outside of a cell.

Central Nervous System: Nerve tissues consisting of the spine and the brain that control the body.

Chakra Medicine: Term explaining the principles behind, and practices of, employing the chakras for healing and life improvement.

Chakra: A subtle energy organ within or linked to the physical body that processes physical and subtle energy.

Chakras, Hindu: There are seven primary chakras in the Hindu system. These are as follows: muladhara (first), svadhisthana (second), manipura (third), anahata (fourth), vishuddha (fifth), ajña (sixth), and sahasrara (seventh).

Chandra Chakra: *see* Soma Chakra

Channel Wheels: Subtle energy bodies comparable to the chakras in Kalachakra Tantra.

Chi: Chinese name for life energy.

Chitrina Nadi: A subtle energy channel inside the sushumna nadi.

Chitta: Mind substance.

Choa Kok Sui: *see* Pranic Healing

Chumpis: Energy belts in the Incan energetic system.

Cinnabar Fields: *see* Elixir fields

Circulation of Light (Shoshuten): Taoist alchemist discipline inviting freedom from outer and inner entanglements.

Citta: A higher mental state.

Clairvoyance: Psychic ability to perceive images and visions on an inner mindscreen.

Classical Physics: Study of the cosmos from the macro point of view.

Confucianism: A philosophical system founded by the Chinese master Confucius.

Consciousness: A state of conscientious awareness.

Conus Medullaris: The tapered lower extremity of the spinal cord.

Creative Drops: *see* Drops

Crop Circles: A flattened area in standing crops that has been formed into shapes by an as-yet undetermined source.

Cymatics: Study of the visible shapes made by sound.

Dahnjons: Subtle energy bodies comparable to the chakras in Korean energy systems.

Dalai Lama: The spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism.

Dantians: Energy centers of chi in Chinese medicine.

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA): The coding genetic material that determines the qualities of an organism.

Devadatta Vayu: One of five sub-vital life forces or energies (pranas); in charge of yawning.

Devas: Gods.

Dhanajaya Vayu: One of five sub-vital life forces or energies (pranas); responsible for opening and closing the heart valves.

Dharma: The principle of cosmic order or natural universal laws in Hinduism; in Buddhism, it is also the practice of people in harmony with these laws.

Diamond Body: *see* Vajra Body

Dimensions: Facets of reality.

Dimethyltryptamine (DMT): A psychedelic compound of the tryptamine family.

Divine Plane: A metaphysical plane that is spiritual in nature.

Dogon: Ethnic group living in Mali, West Africa.

Door of Life (Ming Men): A subtle energy center between the second and third lumbar vertebrae, said to be the location of the first chakra. Carries prenatal chi.

Doshas: Three energies that circulate in the body in ayurvedic medicine.

Dravidians: Group of people who speak Dravidian; along with Aryans, they currently compose Indian society.

Dreamtime: An Aboriginal understanding of the world, including knowledge of the creation; also a state beyond time and space.

Drops: Creative energy drops in the Kalachakra system.

Eight-Limbed Yoga: The eightfold path of yoga from Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*.

Electricity: Physical phenomenon associated with the presence and flow of electrical charge.

Electromagnetic Field (EMF): A field of force composed of electrical and magnetic components.

Electromagnetic Radiation: A spectrum of light or radiation including visible light, radio waves, gamma rays, and X-rays, featuring fluctuations of electrical and magnetic fields.

Electrons: Negatively charged particles.

Elements: Basic natural components of reality. The five elements in the Vedas are as follows: bhumi (earth), jala (water), marut or pavan (air or wind), tejas oragni (fire), and vyom, shunya, or akash (ether or void).

Elixir fields: Also called the dantian and cinnabar field, three focused energy bodies that compose the inner alchemical processes of transformation. Some systems also depict other alchemical elixir fields in and around the body.

Emotion: Product of feelings or feelings and beliefs that determine our perceptions and actions.

Emotional Body: Subtle energy body enabling emotional responses.

Emotional Plane: Metaphysical plane that invites expression.

Energy Bodies: Also called energy centers, which regulate the flow of subtle and physical energies.

Energy Channels: Subtle energy channels in the body, primarily the meridians and the nadis.

Energy Egg: Outermost subtle energy boundary; surrounds the auric field.

Energy Fields: Forces consisting of physical or subtle energies.

Energy, Physical: Measurable and relatively dense energy known through the five senses.

Energy, Psychic: Subtle energy carrying information only perceivable through the intuitive senses.

Energy, Subtle: Spiritual or psychic energy that is deemed immeasurable but underlies all physical reality.

Energy: Information that vibrates or moves.

Enlightenment: The state of union between male and female aspects of self; awareness of higher consciousness.

Enteric Nervous System: Responsible for a number of neural circuits that control motor functions, control blood, and modulate immune and endocrine functions. Often called the "second brain," located between the anus and lower torso, and related to emotions.

Epigenes: Non-coding genetic material said to determine what switches on and off in the genes.

Etheric Bodies: Subtle energy bodies that link the physical body with the higher bodies.

Etheric Planes: Metaphysical planes that represent the lower planes of existence.

Feng Shui: An ancient art revealing how to balance energies in the environment.

Filum Terminale: A strand of fibrous tissue running from the point of the conus medullaris in the spine.

Fontanelle: Space between the bones of the skull in an infant or fetus.

Four Noble Truths: Four main tenets of the Buddhist teachings.

Fraternity of the Rose Cross: *see* Rosicrucianism

Freemasonry: A fraternal organization started by stonemasons dedicated to mystical beliefs.

Frequency: The rate at which a vibration occurs and creates a wave or a field, usually measured in oscillations per second.

Garuda: A large mythical bird in the Hindu and Buddhist religion; Lord Vishnu.

Gautama, Siddhartha: *see* Buddha

Geopathic Stress: The study of earth energies and their effects on human well-being.

Glial Cells: Non-neural cells that support neurons. They are also implicated in empathy between people.

Gnosticism: A collection of ancient religions that refute the material world and embrace the spiritual world.

Golata Chakra: One of the "secret chakras" located near the uvula at the back of the throat.

Granthi: Energetic locks or knots that impede the progress of the upward kundalini movement unless the issues they represent are faced. The three granthi are the Brahma granthi, which blocks the flow of energy from the muladhara (first) chakra upward; the Rudra granthi, which blocks the flow of energy from the manipura (third) chakra upward; and the Vishnu granthi, which blocks the follow of energy beyond the ajña (sixth) chakra.

Gross Energy: *see* Physical Energy

Grounding: The concept of locating one's soul or consciousness inside the entire body and through connection with the earth.

Gunas: The three qualities that arise from the fundamental substrate (prakriti). These are as follows: rajas, the power of energy and action; sattva, the power of harmony; and tamas, the power of darkness and inertia.

Guru Chakra: A secondary chakra usually associated with the ajña (sixth) chakra or the sahasrara (seventh) chakra.

Hara Line Chakras: Chakras that line up vertically along the hara line; located within the emotional body.

Hara Line: The axis around which we incarnated. The hara line reaches into different dimensions and above and below the bodies.

Hara: An energy body similar to a chakra near the navel and considered a gateway to the etheric energy of the planet. It means "sea of energy" and is the center of chi.

Harappan: An Indus Valley civilization with roots back to 2600 BCE.

Healing: The process of achieving a greater state of wholeness.

Hermetic Tradition: An ancient and magical tradition for spiritual growth, attributed to the legendary magician Hermes Trismegistus.

Heruka Buddha: The name of Buddhistic wrathful deities that benefit living beings. They represent bliss and emptiness.

Hesychasm: A Catholic Orthodox tradition of mystical prayer.

Higgs Boson Particle: An elementary particle that is actually an electromagnetic field and has a non-zero constant value.

Himalayan Bon: The second most popular religion in Tibet, Bon presents nine categories of teaching aimed at enlightenment. Also called Himalayan Bonpo.

Hinduism: One of the oldest religions in the world; based on the Vedic scripture.

Holy Spirit: The third and "ghostly" aspect of God in the Christian trinity. The others are God the father and Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit is a feminine spirit in the Jewish religion and Old Testament.

Homeopathy: The treatment of disease by minute doses of natural substances that would normally produce the disease symptoms.

Hormones: Chemical messengers secreted directly into the blood that affect different aspects of bodily functions.

Hridaya Chakra: *see* Hrit Chakra

Hrit Chakra: A secondary chakra below the anahata (fourth) chakra that enables the granting of our soul's deepest wishes.

Ida Nadi: The Hindu energy channel delivering life energy in the left side of the body.

Incans: A South American Indian people who formed one of the largest empires in the world.

Indra: The Hindu god of rain and thunderstorms.

Indu chakra: *see* Soma Chakra

Indus Valley: The area on the fertile flood plain of the Indus River that supported life back to 5500 BCE.

Intuition: The ability to know the unknowable through shared subtle information.

Ion: An atom or molecule with extra or missing electrons.

Ionization: The process through which an atom or molecule loses or gains electrons.

Islam: The Muslim religion, a monotheistic faith as revealed through Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah.

Jiva: Soul or living being.

Jivatman: The individual soul or essence.

Jnana Chakra: *see* Guru Chakra

Jnanendryiya: Organs of the senses.

Jnani: Self-realized; the realized soul.

Judaism: The monotheistic religion of the Jews.

Kabbalah: An ancient Jewish tradition, both spiritual and magical.

Kala: A Sanskrit word meaning "time," kala can refer to a pervasive energy or be a word for serpent or snake, in which case it represents the past, present, and future.

Kalachakra: Cycles of time. The Kalachakra tantra system enables release from the "winds of karma," or the effects of time.

Kali: Hindu goddess of time, doomsday, and death; the black goddess.

Kalpataru: *see* Hrit Chakra

Kama: *see* Trikona

Kamadhenu Chakra: A secondary chakra related to the ajña (sixth) chakra, depicted with several aspects of animals in its form. Called the "wish-giving cow."

Kama Manas: The lower part of the manas, or mind; attracted to material things.

Kama Rupa: The "desire body" that holds our desires, loves, and hates.

Kameshvara Chakra: A secondary chakra related to the ajña (sixth) chakra, located right above the Kamadhenu.

Kanda: A part of the muladhara (first) chakra (sometimes considered a secondary chakra to the muladhara) from which flow all the nadis.

Karma: The sum of a person's actions in this and previous lives, which determines their fate.

Karmendriya: Action organs.

Kashmir Shaivism: One of the schools of Shaivism that is shamanistic and tantric in nature.

Ki: Japanese word for life energy.

Kirlian Photography: A photographic technique that can illuminate the auric field.

Knots: *see* Granthi

Koshas: Energetic sheaths that move from the outer layer of the skin to the deep spiritual core, providing a framework for the self.

Krishna: Popular Hindu deity who appears in a variety of identities.

Krkara Vayu: One of five sub-vital life forces or energies (pranas); handles sneezing, thirst, and hunger.

Kshetram: Reflections of a chakra's trigger points on the front of the body.

Kula Path: A tantric yoga tradition of a "path that isn't a path." It is considered a secret path.

Kundalini: A divinely inspirited feminine life energy, also known as Shakti. A system of enlightenment involves the rise of kundalini, or divine

feminine energy, through the chakras upward through the spine.

Kurma Vayu: One of five sub-vital life forces or energies (pranas); manages the blinking of the eyes.

Lalana Chakra: One of the "secret chakras" located in the soft upper palate. Stores, distills, and sends amrita received from the bindu visarga or soma chakra, depending on the system, to the vishudha chakra for distribution through the body. (Also called the talu and talana chakra.)

Lalata Chakra: One of the "secret chakras" located just over the ajña (sixth) chakra or over the forehead, depending on the system. When empowered, helps us change our destiny. (Also called the talata chakra.)

Latifa: A subtle organ or center, similar to a chakra, in the Sufi religion.

Lemuria: Ancient civilization predating the Great Flood, said to be a time of peace and co-existence with nature.

Ley Lines: A fault line in the earth that often aligns places of geographic interest, such as ancient monuments.

Light Body: A subtle energy body that vibrates at a high level.

Linga: A "mark of god" or essence of the cosmos; also a cap within the chakra system that must be broken as the kundalini rises.

Lingam: A symbol related to Shiva; a "mark of god."

Locks: *see* Granthi

Logos: Means "word," often equated with God.

Lokas: "Worlds" in Sanskrit; there are many lokas, or worlds, under the muladhara (first) chakra.

Lotus: A water lily; chakras look like lotuses.

Macrocosmic Orbit: A Taoist energy cultivation technique that moves chi along energy pathways through the arms and the legs (as an extension of the microscopic orbit.)

Magnetism: Physical phenomenon produced by the motion of electrical charge.

Mahabharata: Along with the Ramayana, one of two great Sanskrit epic poems of India.

Mahanada: A secondary chakra associated with the sahasrara (seventh) chakra. Its name means "great sound."

Mahayana Buddhism: An umbrella for a number of Buddhistic tantra schools.

Manas Chakra: A secondary chakra associated with the ajña (sixth) chakra.

Manas: The thinking mind.

Manasic Plane: A metaphysical plane composed of thoughts and cognitions.

Mandala: A geometric figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism.

Manifesting: The art of attracting what is desired; transferring subtle energy into physical energy.

Manipura Chakra: Third or solar plexus Hindu chakra.

Mantra: Sound or word repeated to aid in meditation.

Marma Point: Juncture on the body where two or more tissues meet. Some marmani are also chakras.

Matrika Chakra: The combination of all the basic sounds or letters; *see* Matrika sounds. These form a power of sound that serves as the subtle force behind thought and speech.

Matrika Sounds: "Mother" sounds that arose from the om and relate to chakra levels. Each is associated with a certain letter.

Maya: The energy that manifests creation. The Sanskrit word means "energy" as well as "illusion."

Mayans: A classical civilization of Mesoamerica.

Medicine Buddha: The face of the Buddha serving as a supreme healer.

Medicine Wheel: A circle of the four directions, each of which holds a certain energy representing stages of life, qualities, elements, animals, and

more.

Meditation: The state of profound and deep peace; occurs when the mind is calm yet alert.

Mental Plane: A metaphysical plane of thought.

Meridians: Subtle energy pathways in the body that carry chi, or vital energy.

Merkabah: A divine light vehicle linking people to higher states of guidance.

Mesmerism: The therapeutic system of Franz Mesmer, which uses nonverbal actions like gazes, strokes, and other methods to create a trancelike state to affect the body's energy field.

Microcosmic Orbit: A Taoist energy cultivation technique that moves chi along energy pathways in the body.

Ming Men Chakra: *see* Door of Life

Minor Chakras: *see* Secondary Chakras:

Moksha: *see* Nirvana

Monad: The concept of the direct force of God. A person's monad is the self within the body of God.

Monadic Planes: A metaphysical plane that encloses the grosser planes; the holy spirit, oversoul, or monadic self exists here.

Mudra: A symbolic hand gesture used to invoke higher energies or influence mood or the body.

Mukta Triveni: The meeting of the three main nadis in the ajña; a place of liberation.

Muladhara Chakra: First, root, or base Hindu chakra.

Nada: Causal vibration.

Nadicakra: *see* Kanda

Nadis: The name for subtle energy channels in the body that carry the kundalini and prana. The ida, pingala, and sushumna are the important ones.

Naga Vayu: One of five sub-vital forces or energies (pranas); oversees belching and the increasing of awareness.

Nahuatl: A member of the group of peoples native to Mesoamerica, including the Aztecs; also their language.

Nazca Lines: Series of ancient and large geoglyphs in southern Peru.

Neoplatonism: A modern philosophy heavily influenced by the Platonic tradition.

Nephilim: From a biblical perspective, the offspring of the "sons of God" that mated with the "daughters of Eve." Sometimes thought to be fallen angels.

Nerve Plexus: A branching network of intersecting nerves.

Nervous System: A network of nerve cells and fibers that transmits nerve impulses. Major parts of the nervous system are as follows: the autonomic, enteric, parasympathetic, peripheral, somatic, and sympathetic nervous systems; *see* each part name for its own glossary entry.

Neuron: A specialized nerve impulse; a nerve cell.

Neuropeptides: Any group of compounds that act as neurotransmitters and are short-chain polypeptides. Often related to emotions.

Neurotransmitters: Chemicals released at the end of a nerve fiber in response to a nerve impulse. Causes the transference of its impulse to another structure.

New Age Movement: A Western spiritual movement that started during the late 1970s and includes age-old esoteric philosophies and practices.

New Thought Movement: A nineteenth-century spiritual movement that emphasizes the power of the mind.

Newton's Laws: Isaac Newton's three laws of motion that describe the movement of objects in the universe.

Nirvana Chakra: A chakra located on the crown of the head. Some systems relate it to the brahmarandhra chakra.

Nirvana-kala: Energetic space in which the kundalini is absorbed and one experiences samadhi, or a higher state.

Nirvana: The state of transcendence in Buddhism; liberation.

Nirvanic Plane: Metaphysical plane of the highest human aspect.

Niyamas: Second limb of the eight limbs of yoga; they are internal practices.

Nonlocality: The ability of objects to know about each other's states or affect each other, even at a distance.

Nucleus: Center of a cell.

Odic Force: Vital energy as described by Baron Karl von Reichenbach.

Om (Aum): The most important Hindu sound; said to have originated the universe.

Omphalos: A rounded stone representing the navel of the earth, as per Greek mythology.

Orenda: Life energy among the Iroquois.

Orgone: Universal life forces proposed by Wilhelm Reich.

Orifices: *see* Ten Gates

Orishas: Spirits in the Yoruba tradition, also associated with chakra-like energy bodies.

Ouroboros: A circular symbol depicting a snake swallowing its tale; the kundalini.

Padma: Hindu word for lotus.

Pain Body: Energy body proposed by Eckhart Tolle.

Panchabhutas: *see* Bhuttas

Para Bindu: The subtle energy that contains the unified Shakti and Shiva; also called the Para Brahman and Supreme Bindu, among other names.

Paranirvanic Plane: Metaphysical plane that is beyond nirvana and has no chakras; sometimes called the monadic plane.

Parasympathetic Nervous System: One of three divisions of the autonomic nervous system, often called the rest-and-digest system for its relaxation qualities.

Past Lives: *see* Reincarnation

Patalas: The seven lower regions of the universe, located under the earth in Hindu mythology.

Peptides: A compound made of two or more amino acids linked in a chain.

Pericarp: The part of a fruit formed from the wall of the ripened ovary; in chakra medicine, pericarp relates to the lotus.

Peripheral Nervous System: The nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord.

Photon: Basic unit of light, a wave and a particle.

Physical Planes: Metaphysical planes of existence establishing the material world.

Physical: Measurable and relatively dense energy known through the five senses.

Pingala Nadi: Hindu subtle energy channel related to the right side of the body.

Platonic Solids: Five shapes that compose the universe, according to Plato: tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedron.

Prakriti: Fundamental substrate of life.

Prakritic Planes: Metaphysical planes, the lowest of the cosmic planes in H. P. Blavatsky's cosmology.

Prana: Life force that composes all living things and matter. Prana also moves in specific ways through the body as vayus (vital winds).

Pranas: Aspects of the breaths; *see* Prana vayus.

Pranava: Cosmic sound, or the om.

Prana Vayu: The flow of energy (prana) spreading through the chest region. Centered in the third eye. It moves inward and upward, nourishing the eyes and brain. Runs the body's ability to receive what it needs from

substances, including food and thoughts. This vayu feeds the other four vayus.

Prana Vayus: The five movements of functions of prana (life force) in the form of breaths, or vital winds (vayu). The five prana vayus are prana, apana, samana, udana, and vyana, each governing a different part of the body; *see* each vayu for its own glossary entry.

Pranayama: Breathing exercises.

Pranic Healing: A systematic healing practice balancing the body's energy processes.

Pratyahara: The fifth element in the eight stages of Patanjali's Ashtanga yoga; also noted in the six-branch yoga of Buddhist Kalachakra. Known as withdrawal of the senses.

Primary cell: The theory that after conception, a primary cell develops that holds all the ingredients of our life path.

Prithivi: A Hindu deity.

Prithvi (also Prithivi): Sanskrit name for "earth."

Proton: A positively charged particle.

Pukios: Subtle energy bodies equivalent to the chakras in the Incan energy system.

Puranas: Ancient Hindu texts eulogizing various deities through stories.

Purusa: Ego.

Purusha: Cosmic man.

Qigong: A Chinese system of physical exercises and breathing.

Qollahuayas: An Andean community that understands the body as a vertically layered system of ducts, comparable to the mountains upon which they live.

Quanta: The smallest units of energy.

Quantum Entanglement: A mechanical phenomenon in which two or more objects, once connected, continue to affect each other, even if separated.

Quantum Physics: A branch of physics that studies physical phenomenon on the microscopic level.

Quetzalcoatl: A Mesoamerican deity whose name in the Nahuatl language means "feathered serpent."

Rainbow Body: A level of realization or transcendence.

Rajas: Power of energy and action.

Ramayana: Along with the Mahabharata, one of two Sanskrit great epic poems of ancient India.

Rays: *see* Seven Rays

Red Hat Tradition: A sect of Tibetan Buddhism, often associated with Himalayan Bon.

Reflexology: A system of massage used to treat problems based on relieving reflex points on the feet, hands, and head.

Reiki: A healing technique based on channeling universal energy.

Reincarnation: The rebirth of a soul in a new body.

Riddhis: While the siddhis are mystical powers, the riddhis are powers often associated with prosperity.

Rig Veda: One of the four main books of Vedic scripture and the oldest.

Rishis: Seers of ancient India who brought forth the Vedic scripture.

Rosicrucianism: A philosophical and mystical secret society started by Christian Rosenkreuz.

Ruah: Feminine name for the Holy Spirit.

Rudra Granthi: Blocks the flow of energy from the manipura (third) chakra upward.

Rudra: A form of the Hindu god Shiva.

Sadhanas: A daily spiritual practice.

Sahasrara Chakra: Crown or seventh Hindu chakra.

Sahmita: A collection of mantras.

Samana Vayu: The flow of energy (prana) from the periphery of the body to the center. Governs the digestion and assimilation of all substances, from food to emotions.

Sama Veda: One of the four main books of the Vedic scripture that is purely liturgical.

Samadhi: *see* Enlightenment

Samsara: *see* Reincarnation

Sanskrit: The ancient Indic language of India.

Saptarishis: The seven sages (rishis) extolled in the Vedas.

Saraswati River: One of the main rivers mentioned in ancient Sanskrit texts.

Sattva: Power of harmony.

Seals: Lenses related to the chakras that when positioned correctly allow control of energetic forces.

Second Brain: *see* Nervous System, Enteric Nervous System

Secondary Chakras: Minor chakras.

Secret of the Golden Flower: A Taoist book about meditation.

Secret Place: In some tantric energy systems, the "great bliss chakra."

Secret: The hidden place of Oneness with Allah or God in Sufism.

Seed Sounds: *see* Bija

Sense Organs: In Sanksrit there are five senses: hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell. The five sense organs are those organs that relate to these senses.

Sephiroth: In the Kabbalah, the sephiroth are the ten attributes or emanations surrounding the Infinity; they are a means of returning from the finite to the infinite.

Seven Asian Churches: Churches mentioned in the New Testament book of Revelation; not only buildings, they also represent higher ideals.

Seven Rays: An occult concept in many cultures suggesting energetic rays composed by near-magical formulation; these are universal in nature.

Sex Chakra: Term often used for the belly, sacral, or second chakra.

Shaktas: Hindu devotees of the Goddess in one of her forms in Hinduism.

Shakti: Hindu goddess who takes many forms; comparable to the kundalini, a primordial cosmic power.

Shaktipat: Hindu and tantric concept of conferring spiritual energy from one person to another.

Shaktona: A symbol in Hinduism that represents the union of the male and feminine forms.

Shamanism: The most ancient form of healing practiced worldwide; the shaman is the "priest/healer."

Shambhala: The name of a mythical kingdom in Central Asia where all enjoy harmony and well-being.

Shen: In Chinese thought, the spiritual element of a person's psyche.

Shiatsu: A form of Japanese therapy in which pressure is applied to points on the body.

Shiva Lingam: A representative of the Hindu deity Shiva used for worship, often referencing creativity and consciousness.

Shiva Samhita: A Sanskrit text on yoga, written from Shiva to his consort, Parvati.

Shiva: A primary form of the God in Hindu mythology.

Shruti: A revered Hindu text said to be a product of divine revelation.

Siddhis: Spiritual gifts that activate upon enlightenment or the merging of Shakti and Shiva in the sahasrara (seventh) chakra.

Silver Cord: A subtle energy cord or rope that attaches the soul to the body during life.

Smitri: Hindu text said to be written by humans, often reflections or rememberances of shruti (sacredly revealed texts).

Soma Chakra: A secondary chakra associated with the ajña (sixth) chakra that looks like a blue-white lotus with twelve to sixteen petals, with a

crescent moon. The moon is the source of nectar (soma or amrita) for the body that actually flows from the Kamadhenu.

Soma Nectar: *see* Amrita

Somatic Nervous System: Also called the voluntary nervous system, part of the peripheral nervous system associated with the voluntary control of body movements.

Songline: Also called a dreaming track, a subtle energy trail across the land that marks a spiritual route.

Sound Carriers: In Hindu mythology, beings—often animalistic—that carry a universal sound from the spiritual realms into physical reality.

Spirit-to-Spirit: A technique I developed to ensure the safe use of chakra medicine techniques.

Spiritism: The belief in nonphysical beings or spirits.

Star Origins: The belief that humankind originally came from the stars.

Strongholds: Energetic blocks, physical or subtle, that cause impediments to health.

Subtle Energy Anatomy: The structures that carry subtle energy. There are three such structures: energy bodies, energy channels, and energy fields.

Subtle Energy: Information that vibrates at the quantum level or in ways that seemingly bend or stretch natural law; also called psychic and spiritual energy. This spiritual or psychic energy is deemed immeasurable but underlies all physical reality.

Subtranspersonal Chakras: Transpersonal or out-of-the-body chakras located under the feet.

Sufism: The mystical system of the Sufis, based on Islam.

Sukshma Sharira: The subtle body.

Supreme Bindu: *see* Para Bindu

Surya Chakra: *see* Hrit Chakra

Sushumna Nadi: The main nadi, associated with the spine.

Sutra: A rule or aphorism in Sanskrit literature; also a Buddhist or Jain scripture.

Svadhisthana Chakra: Second or sacral Hindu chakra.

Sympathetic Nervous System: Part of the autonomic nervous system that also includes the parasympathetic nervous system. Activates the flight, fight, or freeze response.

T'ai Chi: A Chinese exercise distributing subtle energy to provide relaxation and healing.

Talana Chakra: *see* Lalana Chakra

Talu Chakra: *see* Lalana Chakra

Tamas: Power of darkness and inertia.

Tanmatras: In Sanskrit there are five sense perceptions; tanmatras are subtle elements to these senses (hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell) through which we perceive the external environment.

Tantra: A style of meditation and ritual that arose in India no later than the fifth century AD, influencing much of the Eastern world and relating to both Hinduism and Buddhism. The goal is usually enlightenment through means of accepting the physical world.

Tantras: Hindu, Buddhist, and other mystical texts relating to tantra.

Tantra Sects: Various forms of tantra, including black tantra (mental projection during sex), the left-hand path (the practice of tantra associated with breaking taboos), the right-hand path (the practice of tantra associated with benevolent magic), and white tantra (a form of sexual alchemy involving the transmutation of sexual energies while using sex as a spiritual exercise).

Tantric Buddhism: A means to enlightenment through identification to tantric deities. Also called Tibetan Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism.

Tantrika: A follower of Tantra.

Tao: In Chinese philosophy, Tao is the absolute principle that underlies the universe. It involves the balance of feminine and masculine energies and

harmonic order.

Taoism: A philosophical Chinese tradition that emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao.

Tarot: Playing cards used for fortunetelling.

Tattvas: A Sanskrit word representing a truth; an element or aspect of reality conceived as an aspect of deity.

Ten Gates: The openings into the body, such as the ears or mouth.

Theosophical Society: An organization founded in 1875 to investigate the nature of the universe and humanity.

Theravada Buddhism: A dominant form of Buddhism emphasizing the Tripitaka (see Tripitaka) and Four Noble Truths or essence of Buddhist teachings.

Third Eye: A name for the clairvoyant perception related to the ajña (sixth) chakra.

Thoughtforms: A subtle energy string of beliefs from the ego or from humankind. Built consciously or unconsciously, they affect others; we are also affected by others' thoughtforms.

Three Jewels: *see* Three Treasures

Three Treasures: The foundation of all forms of Buddhism. These are the Buddha, dharma, and the bowing to or following the Buddha.

Tibet: A remote and mainly Buddhist territory with great spiritual traditions.

Tibetan Bon: *see* Himalayan Bon

Tibetan Buddhism: *see* Tantric Buddhism

Torsion Fields: Distinct subtle energy fields that travel faster than the speed of light and potentially explain the effects of subtle energy on physical reality.

Torus: A doughnut-looking shape that describes energetic movements, such as that of the heart, the shape of a chakra, or the movement of subtle energies into the physical world.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM): A subtle energy–based healing system invented in China about five thousand years ago.

Transpersonal Chakras: Chakras that extend beyond the bodily located chakras to include chakras above the head (and higher in frequency) and below the feet (or lower in frequency.)

Trataka: Eye-gazing practices.

Tree of Life: A common motif around the world showing the relationship between the heavens, humankind, and the earth.

Tri-loka: In the Hindu cosmology, the universe or a division of it. In generation, the world was made of three worlds: heaven, earth, and the netherworld (which further subdivides).

Trikona: A Sanskrit world signifying a triangle. Different positions impart different attributes.

Trikuti (or Tripatha Sthana): The space between the eyebrows roughly corresponding to the area of the ajña (sixth) chakra.

Trimurti: Three principle deities in Hindu: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, which represent the forces in the universe: creating, maintaining, and destroying.

Tripitaka: A word meaning "three baskets" in Sanskrit, representing the Buddhist scriptures.

Triveni: In Hindu tradition, the confluence of three rivers that creates a sacred place. Here one can wash away sins and free oneself from the cycle of rebirth.

Tsubo Points: A Japanese word for energetic pressure points in the body.

Tummo: Inner fire in Tibetan Buddhism; the heat can change the body's temperature and mind.

Udana Vayu: A circular flow of energy (prana) around the neck and head. Manages speech, self-expression, and self-growth.

Upanishads: A series of Hindu sacred treatises written in Sanskrit that expound upon the Vedas.

Vacuum: In quantum field theory a vacuum is the quantum state with the lowest possible energy. Containing no physical particles, it nonetheless contains virtual particles that can spark physical manifestations.

Vahana: *see* Sound Carriers

Vajra Body: The end result of spiritual practice on the ordinary body, which can become a pure and immaterial body.

Vajrayana Buddhism: *see* Tantric Buddhism

Vayus: Vital breaths, winds, or life forces; *see* Prana Vayu:.

Vedanta: A Hindu philosophy based on the doctrine of the Upanishads.

Vedas: Ancient scripture of East India.

Visarga: Also called the bindu visarga, a space on the back of the head that drops the amrita to the vishuddha for distribution through the bodily system. Sometimes called the indu chakra, or soma chakra; also associated with the sahasrara (seventh) chakra.

Vishnu Granthi: Blocks the follow of energy beyond the ajña (sixth) chakra.

Vishuddha Chakra: Throat or sixth Hindu chakra.

Vital Body: Another name for the etheric body; *see* Etheric Bodies.

Vital Breaths: *see* Prana Vayu:

Vitalism: The theory that life is dependent on a force distinct from chemistry or physicality.

Vitality Globule: A form composed of seven atoms that carries life force.

Vivaxis: An umbilicus-like subtle energy cord linking a person to their place of birth.

Vrittis: In Sanskrit, modifications of the mind that affect our consciousness.

Vyana Vayu: The flow of energy (prana) from the center of the body to the periphery. Governs circulation.

Weidjat: The Eye of Horus, an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection, power, and good health.

Winds (Maruts): Vital air or breaths; in the form of the maruts, gods of the

storm and air; *see* Prana Vayu:.

Yajur Veda: One of the four main Vedic canonical texts of Hinduism, containing liturgy for ceremonial and sacrificial purposes.

Yamas: Codes of self-regulation considered the first limbs on Patajali's eight limbs of yoga.

Yang: The active male principle of the universe in Chinese philosophy.

Yantra: A geometric design or object providing aid in meditation in tantrism.

Yellow Hat tradition: A sect of Buddhism related to the Gelug tradition.

Yin Yang: The balance between the male and female principles of the universe in Chinese philosophy.

Yin: The active female principle of the universe in Chinese philosophy.

Yoga: A spiritual and ascetic discipline usually including breath control, meditation, postures (asanas), and more, promoting physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Yogi: A person proficient in yoga; a spiritual leader.

Yoni: Female energy of the kundalini, represented as a triangle in reference to the chakras.

Yugas: Epochs or ages of time in the Hindu tradition.

Zarathustrianism: A religion founded by Zoroaster; *see* Zoroastrianism.

Zazen: Zen meditation performed in a lotus position.

Zen: A Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism emphasizing the value of meditation and intuition.

Zero-Point Energy: Another name for a zero-point field; *see* Vacuum.

Zoroastrianism: A monotheistic religion founded by Zoroaster in the sixth century BCE.

[contents]

ENDNOTES

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Chapter 20

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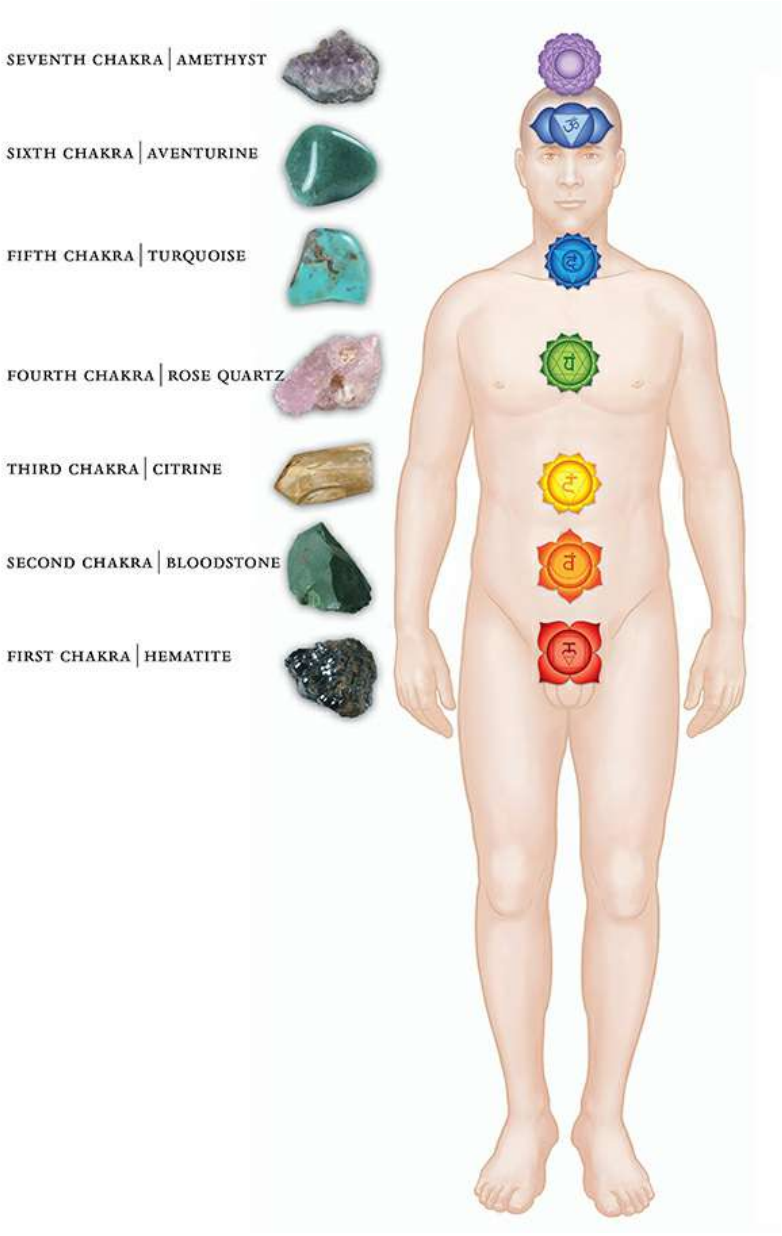
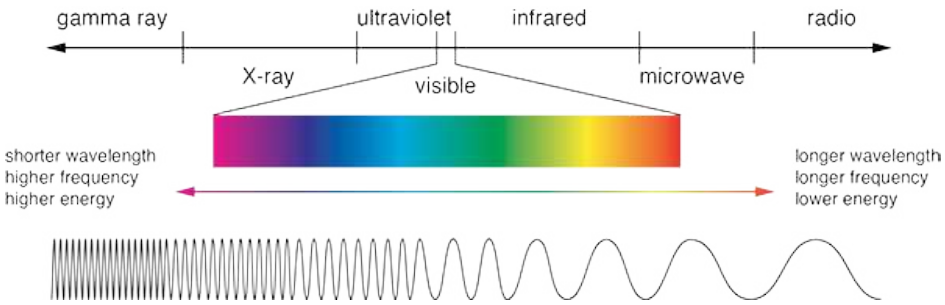
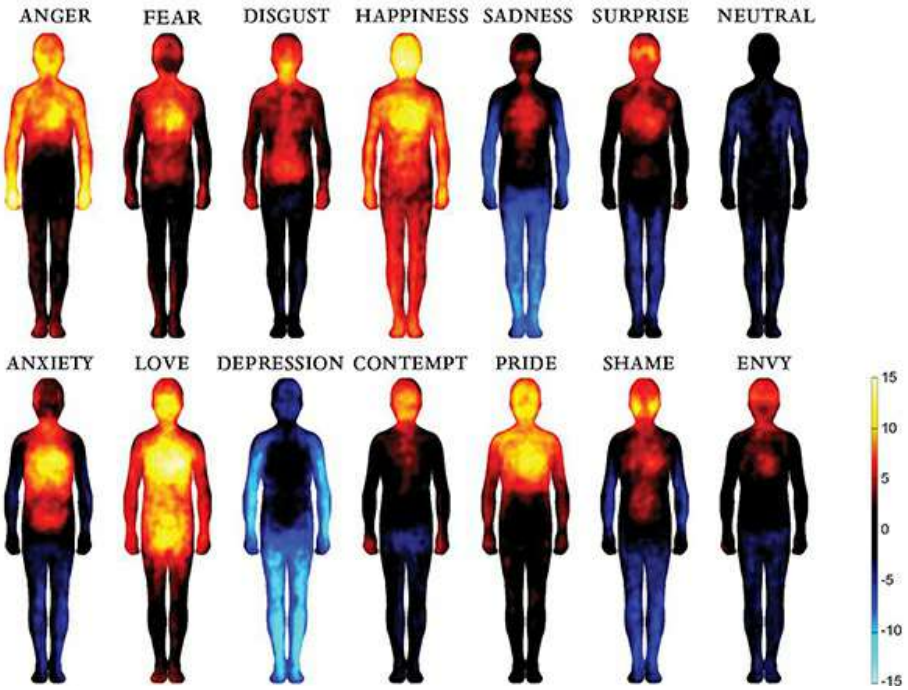

SEVENTH CHAKRA | AMETHYST
SIXTH CHAKRA | AVENTURINE
FIFTH CHAKRA | TURQUOISE
FOURTH CHAKRA | ROSE QUARTZ
THIRD CHAKRA | CITRINE
SECOND CHAKRA | BLOODSTONE
FIRST CHAKRA | HEMATITE

CHAKRAS AND GEMSTONES: The seven major Hindu chakras are symbolically represented here alongside specific gemstones that have been linked to specific chakras across time. Reflecting properties of the related chakras, gemstones can be used for cleansing, healing, meditating, and manifesting.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC



THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM: This illustration shows a comparison of wavelength, frequency, and energy for the electromagnetic spectrum. ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT



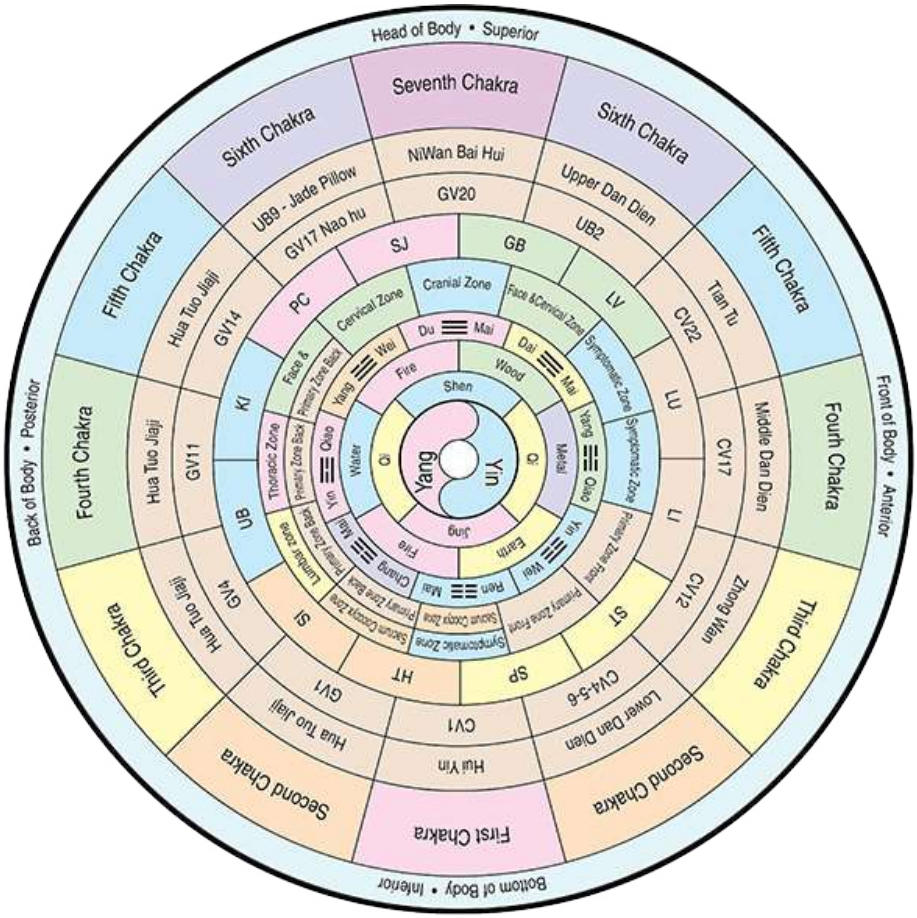
FEELINGS AND BODILY AREAS: The brighter yellow areas reflect increased bodily sensations related to an emotion and the blue areas show decreased bodily reactions. Red is in-between these two reactions. The dark areas show no reaction at all. An intuitive chakra medicine practitioner might perceive the same type of subtle energetics in the chakras. For instance, a practitioner will intuitively see reduced energy overall in a depressed person, with little to no energy flow in the heart chakra. An envious person might have energy "stuck in the head," and a happy person will exhibit the movement of energy

throughout the body. (Also see page 478.) IMAGE COURTESY OF LAURI NUMMENMAA, ENRICO CLEREAN, RIITTA HARI, AND JARI HIETANEN.

ANIMAL CHAKRAS: An animal's chakras attune them to humans and the environment. The dog featured above has all seven chakras as well as an eighth brachial chakra, shown as a black circle. Many animals have the same location points as the dog in this illustration. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

HAND CHAKRAS: These reflexology points indicate which chakras are located at which points in the hand. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

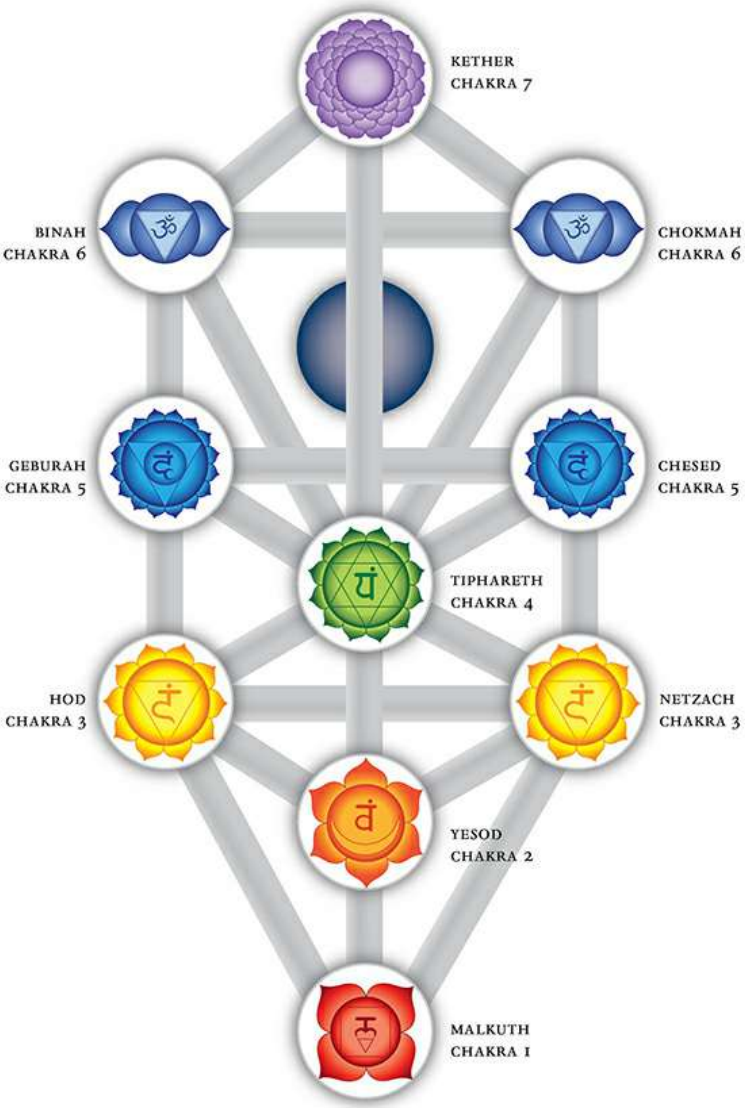
FOOT CHAKRAS: This reflexology chart shows the seven major chakra points in the foot. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC



KUBOTA'S SUBTLE ENERGY FLOW CHART: Dr. Naoiki Kubota, an acupuncturist, blends the meridians, chakras, and body zones with his unique and powerful system. Each circle represents a different energetic system. A brief description follows, from inside to the outside:

In Dr. Kubota's system the entire circle represents the human body seen from the side. The right side of the circle is the front of the body. The left side of the circle is the back of the body. The energy in the body flows clockwise. Yang energy starts at the bottom of body/inferior/first chakra and travels up through the spine to the head of the body/superior/ seventh chakra. Yin energy travels down from the head of the body/superior/seventh chakra through the front center of the body and down to the bottom of the body/inferior/first chakra, completing a circle. To increase energy flow open up the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth chakras on the body's back. This also opens up all the other chakras. IMAGE COURTESY OF NAOIKI KUBOTA

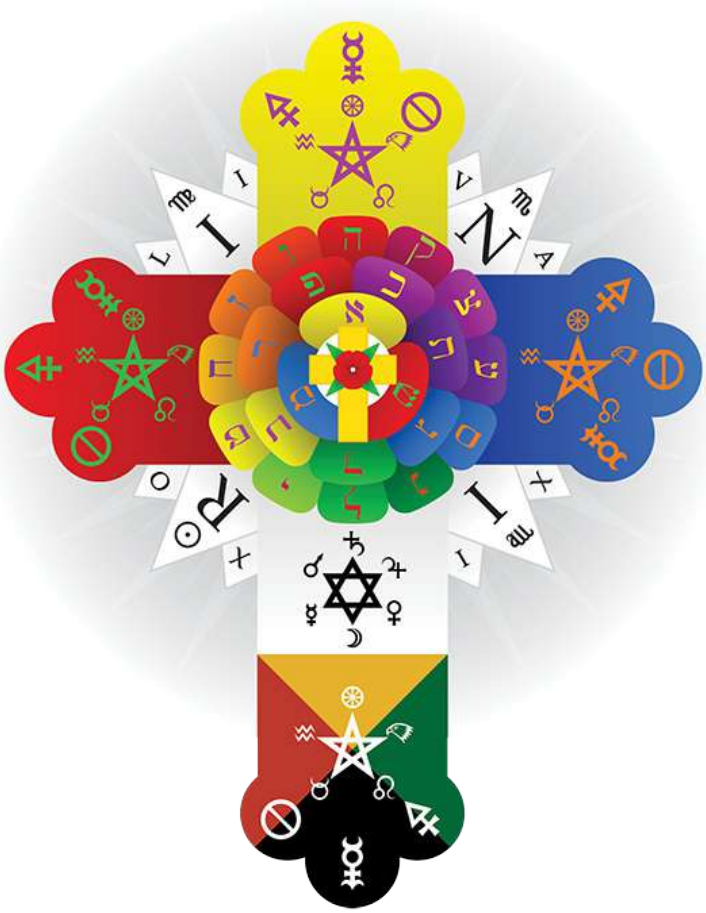
Circle 1—Oneness
Circle 2—Yin/Yang
Circle 3—San Jiao, Shen, Qi, Jing: Types of Energy and Their Bodily Positions
Circle 4—Five Elements
Circle 5—The Eight Extraordinary Vessels
Circle 6—Kubota Zones
Circle 7—Twelve Meridians
Circle 8/9—Acupuncture Points
Circle 10—Chakras
Circle 11—Body Position Relative to the Circle



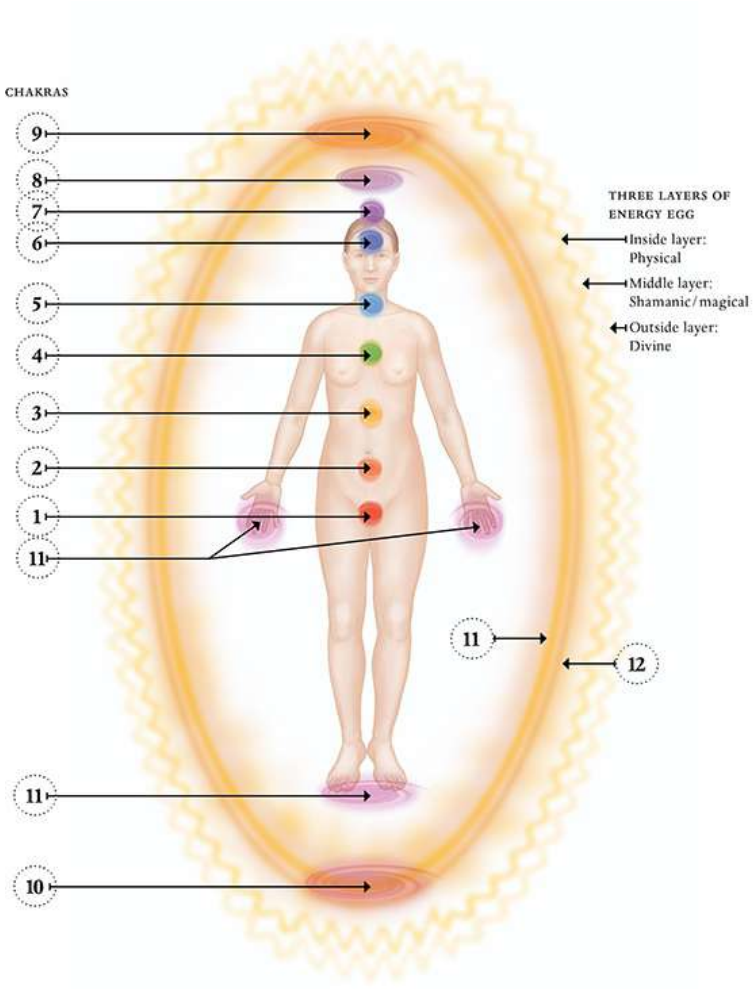
The Chakras and the Kabbalah:

This diagram shows one way to associate the chakras and the Kabbalah. (Also see page 633 for a different assignment of the chakras to the Kabbalah.)

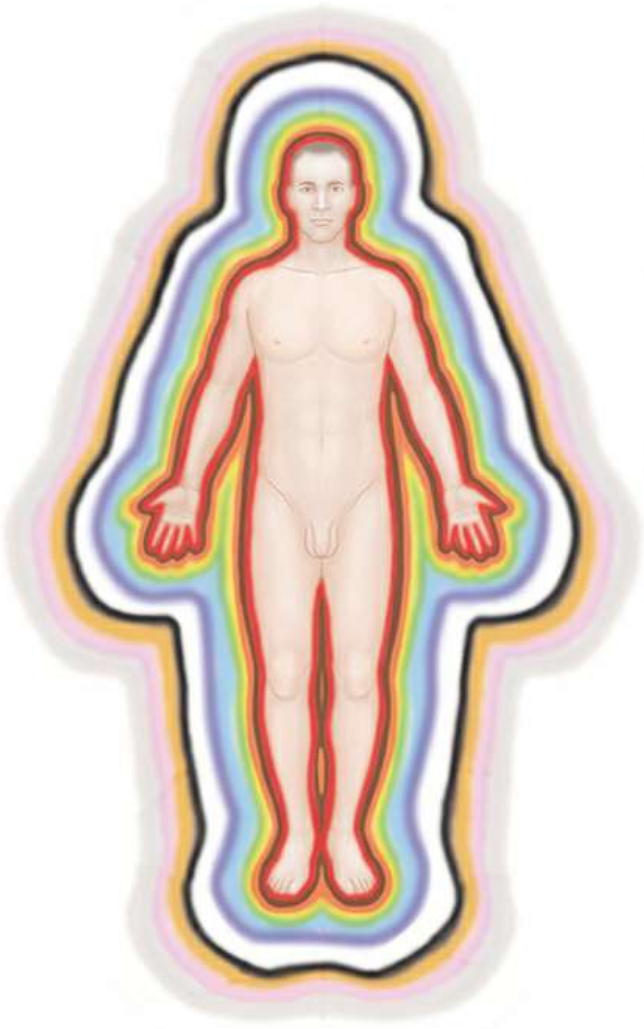
ILLUSTRATION BY LLEWELLYN ART DEPARTMENT



THE ROSE CROSS LAMEN OF THE GOLDEN DAWN: This symbol of the Golden Dawn is a synthesis of tenets embracing the existence of rays, elements, Kabbalah sepiroth, geometric figures, the balance of opposites, and the opening of the chakras. ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES CLARK



THE TWELVE-CHAKRA SYSTEM WITH AURIC FIELD AND ENERGY EGG: My twelve-chakra system features twelve chakras. (The twelfth chakra is in the energetic field.) Twelve auric layers, which aren't shown specifically, are surrounded by an energy egg, which is composed of three layers. (Also see page 765.) ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC



Auric Field	Color
First	Red
Tenth	Brown
Second	Orange
Third	Yellow
Fourth	Green
Fifth	Blue
Sixth	Purple
Seventh	White
Eighth	Black
Ninth	Gold
Eleventh	Pink
Twelfth	Translucent

THE TWELVE-CHAKRA AURIC FIELD: The twelve-chakra system features twelve auric layers, each of which is affiliated with one of the chakras. While most of the layers stack upon each other in sequence, the tenth auric field actually follows the first auric field. Afterward is the second auric field, the third, and so on. The auric layers are described in order of their location and by color. This illustration can be compared to that on page 760, which has seven layers. ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANN ZAPALAC

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